This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

AH 4MBA V

Harvard Depository
Brittle Book

Digitized by Google

6867fi
Barclay

Andover Theological Seminary

ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY

MDCCCCX

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Marshall

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

VIEWS

OF

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

HELD BY

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

BEING

PASSAGES TAKEN FROM

BARCLAY'S APOLOGY,

WITH THE DESIRE ON THE PART OF THE EDITOR
TO PRESENT IN SMALLER COMPASS,
BUT UNCHANGED,
THE TRUTHS SET FORTH IN HIS WORK,
AND SOME OF HIS ARGUMENTS IN THEIR SUPPORT.

PHILADELPHIA:
FOR SALE AT FRIENDS' BOOK-STORE,
304 ARCH STREET.
1882.

Digitized by Google

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
A71.698

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THE work from which these passages are taken, is styled

AN APOLOGY FOR THE TRUE CHRISTIAN DIVINITY,
BEING AN EXPLANATION AND VINDICATION
OF THE PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES OF
THE PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS.
BY ROBERT BARCLAY, 1675.

In his address to the Reader, he says:

"Forasmuch as that, which above all things I propose to myself, is to declare and defend the truth, for the service whereof I have given up and devoted myself and all that is mine: therefore there is nothing which for its sake, by the help and assistance of God, I may not attempt.

"I have not sought to accommodate this my work to itching ears, who desire rather to comprehend in their heads the sublime notions of truth, than to embrace it

Digitized by Google

in their hearts: for what I have written comes more from my heart than from my head; what I have heard with the ears of my soul, and seen with my inward eyes, and my hands have handled of the Word of Life, and what hath been inwardly manifested to me of the things of God, that do I declare; not so much regarding the eloquence and excellency of speech, as desiring to demonstrate the efficacy and operation of truth."

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

PROPOSITION I.

PAGE

CONCERNING THE TRUE FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE . . 5

PROPOSITION II.

CONCERNING IMMEDIATE REVELATION 8

PROPOSITION III.

CONCERNING THE SCRIPTURES 35

PROPOSITION IV.

CONCERNING THE CONDITION OF MAN IN THE FALL . . 56

PROPOSITIONS V. AND VI.

CONCERNING THE UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION BY CHRIST, AND ALSO THE SAVING AND SPIRITUAL LIGHT WHEREWITH EVERY MAN IS ENLIGHTENED 60

PROPOSITION VII.

CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION 112

PROPOSITION VIII.

CONCERNING PERFECTION 133

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION IX.

PAGE

CONCERNING PERSEVERANCE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF FALLING FROM GRACE 145

PROPOSITION X.

CONCERNING THE MINISTRY 149

PROPOSITION XI.

CONCERNING WORSHIP 183

PROPOSITION XII.

CONCERNING BAPTISM 217

PROPOSITION XIII.

CONCERNING THE COMMUNION OR PARTICIPATION OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST 235

PROPOSITION XIV.

CONCERNING THE POWER OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE IN MATTERS PURELY RELIGIOUS AND PERTAINING TO THE CONSCIENCE 260

PROPOSITION XV.

CONCERNING SALUTATIONS AND RECREATIONS . . . 267

Digitized by Google

AN APOLOGY

FOR THE

TRUE CHRISTIAN DIVINITY.

PROPOSITION I.

CONCERNING THE TRUE FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

SEEING the height of all happiness is placed in the true knowledge of God; "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;" the true and right understanding of this foundation and ground of knowledge is that which is most necessary to be known and believed in the first place. John xvii. 3.

HE THAT desireth to acquire any art or science, seeketh first those means by which that art or science is obtained. If we ought to do so in things natural and earthly, how much more then in spiritual? In this affair then should our inquiry be the more diligent, because he that errs in the entrance is not so easily brought back again into the

Digitized by Google

right way; he that misseth his road from the beginning of his journey, and is deceived in his first marks, at his first setting forth, the greater his mistake is, the more difficult will be his entrance into the right way.

Thus when a man first proposeth to himself the knowledge of God, from a sense of his own unworthiness, and from the great weariness of his mind, occasioned by the secret checks of his conscience, and the tender, yet real glances of God's light upon his heart; the earnest desires he has to be redeemed from his present trouble, and the fervent breathings he has to be eased of his disordered passions and lusts, and to find quietness and peace in the certain knowledge of God, and in the assurance of his love and good-will towards him, make his heart tender, and ready to receive any impression; and so—not having then a distinct discerning—through forwardness embraceth any thing that brings present ease. If, either through the reverence he bears to certain persons, or from the secret inclination to what doth comply with his natural disposition, he fall upon any principles or means, by which he apprehends he may come to know God, and so doth centre himself, it will be hard to remove him thence again, how wrong so ever they may be; for the first anguish being over, he becomes more hardy; and the enemy being near, creates a false peace, and a certain confidence, which is strengthened by the mind's unwillingness to enter again into new doubtfulness, or the former anxiety of a search.

This is abundantly proved by the experience of all such, as being secretly touched with the call of God's grace unto

Digitized by Google

them, do apply themselves to false teachers, where the remedy proves worse than the disease; because instead of knowing God, or the things relating to their salvation aright, they drink in wrong opinions of him; from which it is harder to be disentangled, than while the soul remains a blank.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION II.

OF IMMEDIATE REVELATION.

SEEING "no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him;" and seeing the
Mat. xi. 27. "revelation of the Son is in and by the Spirit;" therefore the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed; who as, by the moving of his own Spirit, he disposed the chaos of this world into that wonderful order in which it was in the beginning, and created man a living soul, to rule and govern it, so by the revelation of the same Spirit he hath manifested himself all along unto the sons of men, both patriarchs, prophets, and apostles; which revelations of God by the Spirit, whether by outward voices and appearances, dreams, or inward manifestations in the heart, were of old the object of their faith, and remain yet so to be; since the object of the saints' faith is the same in all ages, though held forth under divers administrations. Moreover, these divine inward revelations, which we make absolutely necessary for the building up of true faith, neither do nor can ever contradict the outward testimony of the scriptures, or right and sound reason. Yet from hence it will not follow, that these

Digitized by Google

divine revelations are to be subjected to the test, either of the outward testimony of the scriptures, or of the natural reason of man, as to a more noble or certain rule and touchstone; for this divine revelation and inward illumination, is that which is evident and clear of itself, forcing, by its own evidence and clearness, the well-disposed understanding to assent, irresistibly moving the same thereunto, even as the common principles of natural truths do move and incline the mind to a natural assent: as, that the whole is greater than its part.

For the better understanding of this proposition, we do distinguish betwixt the certain knowledge of God, and the uncertain; betwixt the spiritual knowledge, and the literal; the saving heart-knowledge, and the soaring airy head knowledge. The last, we confess, may be divers ways obtained; but the first, by no other way than the inward immediate manifestation and revelation of God's Spirit, shining in and upon the heart, enlightening and opening the understanding.

The certainty of which truth is such, that it hath been acknowledged by some of the most refined and famous of all sorts of professors of Christianity in all ages.

Cyrillus Alexandrinus affirmeth, "That men know that Jesus is the Lord by the Holy Ghost, no otherwise, than they who taste honey know that it is sweet, even by its proper quality."

Luther, in his book to the nobility of Germany, saith,

Digitized by Google

"This is certain, that no man can make himself a teacher of the holy scriptures, but the holy Spirit alone." And upon the Magnificat he saith, "No man can rightly know God, or understand the word of God, unless he immediately receive it from the Holy Spirit; neither can any one receive it from the Holy Spirit, except he find it by experience in himself; and in this experience the Holy Ghost teacheth, as in his proper school; out of which school nothing is taught but mere talk."

Philip Melancthon, in his annotations upon John vi.: "Those who hear only an outward and bodily voice, hear the creature; but God is a Spirit, and is neither discerned, nor known, nor heard, but by the Spirit; and therefore to hear the voice of God, to see God, is to know and hear the Spirit. By the Spirit alone God is known and perceived. All those who apply themselves effectually to Christianity, and are not satisfied until they have found its effectual work upon their hearts, redeeming them from sin, do feel that no knowledge effectually prevails to the producing of this, but that which proceeds from the warm influence of God's Spirit upon the heart, and from the comfortable shining of his light upon their understanding."

And therefore to this purpose a modern author, viz., Dr. Smith of Cambridge, in his select discourses, saith well; "To seek our divinity merely in books and writings, is to seek the living among the dead; we do but in vain many times seek God in these, where his truth is too often not so much enshrined as entombed. *Intra te quære Deum*, Seek God within thine own soul. He is best discerned, νοερᾷ

Digitized by Google

ἁπαφῆ, as Plotinus phraseth it, by an intellectual touch of him. We must see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and our hands must handle the word of life—to express it in St. John's words.—ἔςι καὶ ψυχῆς αἴσθησις τις, &c., the soul itself hath its sense, as well as the body. And therefore David, when he would teach us to know what the divine goodness is, calls not for speculation, but sensation: 'Taste, and see that the Lord is good.' That is not the best and truest knowledge of God which is wrought out by the labor and sweat of the brain, but that which is kindled within us, by an heavenly warmth in our hearts." And again: "There is a knowing of the truth as it is in Jesus, as it is in a Christ-like nature; as it is in that sweet, mild, humble, and loving Spirit of Jesus, which spreads itself, like a morning sun, upon the souls of good men, full of light and life. It profits little to know Christ himself after the flesh; but he gives his Spirit to good men, that searcheth the deep things of God."

IF WE MAKE a right definition of a Christian, according to the scriptures, That he is one that hath the spirit of Christ, and is led by it, how many Christians, yea, and of these great masters and doctors of Christianity, so accounted, shall we justly divest of that noble title? If those therefore who have all the other means of knowledge, and are sufficiently learned therein, whether it be the letter of the scripture, the traditions of churches, or the works of creation and providence, are not yet to be esteemed Christians according to the certain definition above mentioned; and if the inward and immediate revelation of

Digitized by Google

God's Spirit in the heart, in such as have been altogether ignorant of some, and but very little skilled in others, of these means of attaining knowledge, hath brought them to salvation; then it will necessarily follow, that inward and immediate revelation is the only sure way to attain the true and saving knowledge of God.

Nor dare any affirm, that none come to the knowledge of God and salvation by the inward revelation of the Spirit, without these other outward means, unless they be also so bold as to exclude Abel, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Job, and all the holy patriarchs from true knowledge and salvation.

I WOULD however not be understood, as if hereby I excluded those other means of knowledge from any use or service to man; it is far from me so to judge, as concerning the scriptures, in the next proposition, will more plainly appear. The question is not, what may be profitable or helpful, but what is absolutely necessary. Many things may contribute to further a work, which yet are not the main thing that makes the work go on.

The sum then of what is said amounts to this: That where the true inward knowledge of God is, through the revelation of his Spirit, there is all; neither is there an absolute necessity of any other. But where the best, highest, and most profound knowledge is, without this there is nothing, as to the obtaining the great end of salvation. This truth is very effectually confirmed by the first part of the proposition itself, which in few words comprehendeth divers unquestionable arguments.

Digitized by Google

First, That there is no knowledge of the Father but by the Son.

Secondly, That there is no knowledge of the Son but by the Spirit.

Thirdly, That by the Spirit God hath always revealed himself to his children.

Fourthly, That these revelations were the object of the saints' faith.

And Lastly, That the same continueth to be the object of the saints' faith to this day.

As to the first, viz., That there is no knowledge of the Father but by the Son, it will easily be proved, being founded upon the plain words of scripture, "No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him," Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22. And again, he himself saith, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me," John xiv. 6.

Hence he is fitly called, The mediator betwixt God and man: for having been with God from all eternity, being himself God, and also in time partaking of the nature of man, through him is the goodness and love of God conveyed to mankind, and by him again man receiveth and partaketh of these mercies.

Having then laid down this first principle, I come to the second, viz.: That there is no knowledge of the Son but by the Spirit; or, That the revelation of the Son of God is by the Spirit.

Where it is to be noted, that I always speak of the saving, certain, and necessary knowledge of God; which that it

Digitized by Google

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
A71.698

Digitized by Google

comparison, in the verses
answerable to our purpose
of a man are only known
ngs of God are only known
that as nothing below the
brutes, or any other crea-
or comprehend the things of
higher nature, so neither
atural man, receive nor dis-
things that are spiritual, as
; which the apostle himself
Neither can he know them,
cerned."
aying of the same apostle,
ay that Jesus is the Lord,
e scripture, which is full of
l to the enlightened under-
real Christian, may perhaps
al and pretended follower of
th not been so diligently re-
h so much require the Holy
to a Christian, that he posi-
uch as affirm Jesus to be the

. That by the Spirit God
his children. I think it will
nverse with man, all along
the immediate manifestation
s, through the whole tract of

Digitized by Google

cannot be acquired otherways than by the Spirit, doth also appear from many clear scriptures. For Jesus Christ, in and by whom the Father is revealed, doth also reveal himself to his disciples and friends in and by his Spirit. As his manifestation was outward, when he testified and witnessed for the truth in this world, so being now withdrawn, as to the outward man, he doth teach and instruct mankind inwardly by his own Spirit; "He standeth at the door, and knocketh, and whoso heareth his voice and openeth, he comes in" to such, Rev. iii. 20. Of this revelation of Christ in him Paul speaketh, Gal. i. 16, in which he placeth the excellency of his ministry, and the certainty of his calling. And the promise of Christ to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world," confirmeth the same thing; for this is an inward and spiritual presence, as all acknowledge.

I shall deduce the proof of this proposition from two manifest places of scripture: the first is, 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God." The apostle, in the verses before, speaking of the wonderful things which are prepared for the saints, after he hath declared, that "the natural man cannot reach them," adds, that "they are revealed by the Spirit of God," ver. 9, 10, giving this reason, "For the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God."

Digitized by Google

And then he bringeth in the comparison, in the verses above-mentioned, very apt, and answerable to our purpose and doctrine, that "as the things of a man are only known by the spirit of man, so the things of God are only known by the Spirit of God;" that is, that as nothing below the spirit of man (as the spirit of brutes, or any other creatures) can properly reach unto or comprehend the things of a man, as being of a nobler and higher nature, so neither can the spirit of man, or the natural man, receive nor discern the things of God, or the things that are spiritual, as being also of an higher nature; which the apostle himself gives for the reason, saying, "Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The other scripture is also a saying of the same apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 3. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." This scripture, which is full of truth, and answereth full well to the enlightened understanding of the spiritual and real Christian, may perhaps prove very strange to the carnal and pretended follower of Christ, by whom perhaps it hath not been so diligently remarked. Here the apostle doth so much require the Holy Spirit in the things that relate to a Christian, that he positively avers, we cannot so much as affirm Jesus to be the Lord without it.

THE THIRD thing affirmed is, That by the Spirit God always revealed himself to his children. I think it will not be denied, that God's converse with man, all along from Adam to Moses, was by the immediate manifestation of his Spirit: and afterwards, through the whole tract of

Digitized by Google

the law, he spake to his children no otherways; which cannot be denied by such as acknowledge the scriptures of truth to have been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost: for these writings, from Moses to Malachi, do declare, that during all that time God revealed himself to his children by his Spirit.

But if any will object, that after the dispensation of the law God's method of speaking was altered; I answer: That God spake always immediately to the Jews, in that he spake always immediately to the High-Priest from betwixt the Cherubims: who, when he entered into the Holy of Holies, returning, did relate to the whole people the voice and will of God, there immediately revealed. So that this immediate speaking never ceased in any age.

From this immediate fellowship were none shut out, who earnestly sought after and waited for it; in that many, besides the High-Priest, who were not so much as of the kindred of Levi, nor of the Prophets, did receive it and speak from it; as it is written, Numb. xi. 25, where the Spirit is said to have rested on the seventy elders; which Spirit also reached unto two that were not in the tabernacle, but in the camp; whom when some would have forbidden, Moses would not, but rejoiced, wishing that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that he would put his Spirit upon them, ver. 29.

This is also confirmed, Neh. ix., where the elders of the people, after their return from captivity, when they began to sanctify themselves by fasting and prayer, numbering up the many mercies of God towards their fathers, say,

Digitized by Google

verse 20, "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them;" and verse 30, "Yet many years didst thou forbear, and testify against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets." Many are the sayings of spiritual David to this purpose, as Psalm li. 11, 12, "Take not thy holy Spirit from me: uphold me with thy free Spirit." Psal. cxxxix. 7, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" Hereunto doth the prophet Isaiah ascribe the credit of his testimony, saying, chap. xlviii. 16, "And now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me." And that God revealed himself to his children under the New Testament, to wit, to the apostles, evangelists, and primitive disciples, is confessed by all.

THE FOURTH thing affirmed is, That these revelations were the object of the saints' faith of old.

This will easily appear by the definition of faith, and considering what its object is. "Faith," saith the apostle Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen:" which, as the apostle illustrateth it in the same chapter by many examples, is no other but a firm and certain belief of the mind, whereby it resteth, and in a sense possesseth the substance of some things hoped for, through its confidence in the promise of God: and thus the soul hath a most firm evidence, by its faith, of things not yet seen nor come to pass. The object of this faith is the promise, word, or testimony of God, speaking in the mind. Hence it hath been generally affirmed, that the object of faith is *Deus loquens*, etc., that is, God speaking, etc., which is also manifest from all those

Digitized by Google

examples deduced by the apostle throughout that whole chapter, whose faith was founded neither upon any outward testimony, nor upon the voice or writing of man, but upon the revelation of God's will, manifest unto them, and in them; as in the example of Noah, ver. 7, thus, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." What was here the object of Noah's faith, but God speaking unto him? He had not the writings nor prophesyings of any going before, nor yet the concurrence of any church or people to strengthen him; and yet his faith in the word, by which he contradicted the whole world, saved him and his house. Of which also Abraham is set forth as a singular example, being therefore called the Father of the faithful, who is said against hope to have believed in hope, in that he not only willingly forsook his father's country, not knowing whither he went; in that he believed concerning the coming of Isaac, though contrary to natural probability; but above all, in that he refused not to offer him up, not doubting but God was able to raise him from the dead; of whom it is said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called The object of Abraham's faith in all this was no other but inward and immediate revelation, or God signifying his will unto him inwardly and immediately by his Spirit.

It may be objected, that those who found their faith now upon immediate revelation, ought to have also outward voices or visions, dreams or appearances for it.

Digitized by Google

It is not denied, but God made use of the ministry of angels, who, in the appearance of men, spake outwardly to the saints of old, and that he did also reveal some things to them in dreams and visions. Let us consider how or how far these outward voices, appearances, and dreams were the object of the saints' faith: was it because they were simply voices, appearances, or dreams? Nay, certainly; for they were not ignorant, that the devil might form a sound of words, convey it to the outward ear, and deceive the outward senses, by making things to appear that are not. What made them then give credit to these visions? Certainly nothing else but the secret testimony of God's Spirit in their hearts, assuring them that the voices, dreams, and visions were of and from God. Abraham believed the angels; but who told him that these men were angels? We must not think his faith then was built upon his outward senses, but proceeded from the secret persuasion of God's Spirit in his heart.

We may observe many passages of the holy scripture, where it is only mentioned, "And God said," etc., "And the word of the Lord came" unto such and such, saying, etc. Seeing the Spirit of God is within us, and not without us only, it speaks to our spiritual, and not to our bodily ear. Therefore I see no reason, where it is so often said in scripture, The Spirit said, moved, hindered, called such or such a one, to do or forbear such or such a thing, that any have to conclude, that this was not an inward voice to the ear of the soul, rather than an outward voice to the bodily ear.

Digitized by Google

THESE INWARD and immediate revelations continue to be the object of the saints' faith unto this day. If the faith of the ancients were not one and the same with ours, *i. e.*. agreeing in substance therewith, and receiving the same definition, it had not been pertinent for the apostle, Heb. xi., to have illustrated the definition of our faith by the examples of that of the ancients, or to go about to move us by the example of Abraham, if Abraham's faith were different in nature from ours. Nor doth any difference arise hence, because they believed in Christ with respect to his appearance outwardly as future, and we as already appeared: for neither did they then so believe in him to come, as not to feel him present with them, and witness him near; seeing the apostle saith, "They all drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, which rock was Christ;" nor do we so believe concerning his appearance past, as not also to feel and know him present with us, and to feed upon him; except Christ, saith the apostle, be in you, ye are reprobates; so that the faith of both is one, terminating in one and the same thing. And as to the other part or consequence of the antecedent, to wit, That the object is one where the faith is one, the apostle also proveth it in the fore-cited chapter, where he makes all the worthies of old examples to us. Now wherein are they imitable, but because they believed in God? And what was the object of their faith, but inward and immediate revelation, as we have before proved? Their example can be no ways applicable to us, except we believe in God, as they did, that is, by the same object.

Digitized by Google

Such as deny this now-a-days use here a distinction; granting that God is to be known by his Spirit, but again denying that it is immediate or inward, but in and by the scriptures; in which the mind of the Spirit (as they say) being fully and amply expressed, we are thereby to know God, and be led in all things.

That Christians now are to be led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God, even in the same manner, though it befall not many to be led in the same measure, as the saints were of old, I shall prove by divers arguments: and first from the promise of Christ in these words, John xiv. 16, "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Ver. 17. "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Again, ver. 26. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance." And xvi. 13. But "when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak, and he will show you things to come." We have here first, who this is; and that is divers ways expressed, to wit: The Comforter, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost, the Sent of the Father in the name of Christ. Secondly, Where this Spirit is to be, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And thirdly, What his work is, "He shall teach you all things, and

Digitized by Google

bring all things to your remembrance, and guide you into all truth."

As to the first, most do acknowledge that there is nothing else understood than what the plain words signify. As to the second, That this Spirit is inward, in my opinion needs no interpretation or commentary, "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." This indwelling of the Spirit in the saints, as it is a thing most needful to be known and believed, so is it as positively asserted in the scripture as any thing else can be. "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," saith the apostle to the Romans, chap. viii. 9. And again, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. vi. 19. "And that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. iii. 16. Without this the apostle reckoneth no man a Christian. "If any man (saith he) have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Whatsoever is excellent, whatsoever is noble, whatsoever is worthy, whatsoever is desirable in the Christian faith, is ascribed to this Spirit, without which it could no more subsist than the outward world without the sun. Hereunto have all true Christians, in all ages, attributed their strength and life. It is by this Spirit that they avouch themselves to have been converted to God, to have been redeemed from the world, to have been strengthened in their weakness, comforted in their afflictions, confirmed in their temptations, emboldened in their sufferings, and triumphed in the midst of all their persecutions. Yea, the writings of all true Christians are full of the great and notable things which they all affirm themselves to have done, by the power, and

Digitized by Google

virtue, and efficacy of this Spirit of God working in them. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," John vi. 63. It was the Spirit that gave them utterance, Acts ii. 4. It was the Spirit by which Stephen spake, that the Jews were not able to resist, Acts vi. 10. It is such as walk after the Spirit that receive no condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. It is the law of the Spirit that makes free, ver. 2. It is by the Spirit of God dwelling in us that we are redeemed from the flesh and from the carnal mind, ver. 9. It is the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us that quickeneth our mortal bodies, ver. 11. It is through this Spirit that the deeds of the body are mortified and life obtained, ver. 13. It is by this Spirit that we are adopted, and "cry ABBA Father," ver. 15. It is this "Spirit that beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," ver. 16. It is this "Spirit that helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered," ver. 26. It is by this Spirit that the glorious things which God hath laid up for us, which neither outward ear hath heard, nor outward eye hath seen, nor the heart of man conceived by all his reasonings, are revealed unto us, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. It is by this Spirit that both wisdom and knowledge, and faith, and miracles, and tongues, and prophecies, are obtained, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10. It is by this Spirit that we are "all baptized into one body," ver. 13. In short, what thing relating to the salvation of the soul, and to the life of a Christian, is rightly performed, or effectually obtained, without it? And what shall I say more? For the time would fail me to tell of all those things which the holy

Digitized by Google

men of old have declared, and the saints of this day do themselves enjoy, by the virtue and power of this Spirit dwelling in them.

If therefore it be so, why should any be so foolish as to deny, or so unwise as not to seek after this Spirit, which Christ hath promised shall dwell in his children? They then that do suppose the indwelling and leading of his Spirit to be ceased, must also suppose Christianity to be ceased, which cannot subsist without it.

Thirdly, What the work of this Spirit is, is partly before shown, which Christ compriseth in two or three things, "He will guide you into all truth;" "He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance." Since Christ hath provided for us so good an instructor, why need we then lean so much to those traditions and commandments of men wherewith so many Christians have burthened themselves? Why need we set up our own carnal and corrupt reason for a guide to us in matters spiritual, as some will needs do? May it not be complained of all such, as the Lord did of old concerning Israel by the prophets, Jer. ii. 13: "For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water?" Have not many forsaken, do not many deride and reject, this inward and immediate guide, this Spirit that leads into all truth, and cast up to themselves other ways, broken ways indeed, which have not all this while brought them out of the flesh, nor out of the world, nor from under the dominion of their own lusts

John xvi. 13 and 14, 26.

Digitized by Google

and sinful affections, whereby truth, which is only rightly learned by this Spirit, is so much a stranger in the earth?

From all then that hath been mentioned concerning this promise, and these words of Christ, it will follow, that Christians are always to be led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God dwelling in them, and that the same is a standing and perpetual ordinance, as well to the church in general in all ages as to every individual member in particular.

BUT THERE are some that will confess, That the Spirit doth now lead and influence the saints, but that he doth it only by enlightening their understanding, to understand and believe the truth delivered in the scriptures.

This opinion is not altogether according to truth, neither doth it reach the fulness of it. Because there be many truths, which as they are applicable to particulars and individuals, and most needful to be known by them, are in nowise to be found in the scripture. Besides, that which teacheth me all things, and is given me for that end, without doubt presents those things to my mind which it teacheth me. It is not said, It shall teach you how to understand those things that are written; but, It shall teach you all things.

My second argument shall be drawn from the nature of the new covenant; by which, and those that follow, I shall prove that we are led by the Spirit immediately.

The nature of the new covenant is expressed in divers places; First, Isa. lix. 21, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee,

Digitized by Google

and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." By the latter part of this is sufficiently expressed the perpetuity and continuance of this promise, "It shall not depart, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." In the former part is the promise itself, which is the Spirit of God being upon them, and the words of God being put into their mouths.

There is no mention made of any medium; he saith not, I shall by the means of such and such writings or books, convey such and such words into your mouths; but My words, I, even I, saith the Lord, have put into your mouths. He saith not, The words which ye shall see written, my Spirit shall only enlighten your understandings to assent unto; but positively, "My words, which I have put in thy mouth."

The nature of the new covenant is yet more amply expressed, Jer. xxxi. 33, which is again repeated and reasserted by the apostle, Heb. viii. 10, 11, in these words, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." In this then is the law distinguished from the gospel; the law before was outward, written in tables of stone, but now is

Digitized by Google

inward, written in the heart: of old the people depended upon their priests for the knowledge of God, but now they have all a certain and sensible knowledge of Him.

How much then are they deceived, who, instead of making the gospel preferable to the law, have made the condition of such as are under the gospel far worse? For no doubt it is a far better and more desirable thing to converse with God immediately, than only mediately, as being an higher and more glorious dispensation; and yet these men acknowledge that many under the law had immediate converse with God, whereas they now cry it is ceased.

Again: Under the law there was the holy of holies, into which the high priest did enter, and received the word of the Lord immediately from betwixt the cherubims, so that the people could then certainly know the mind of the Lord; but now, according to these men's judgment, we are in a far worse condition, having nothing but the outward letter of the scripture to guess and divine from. But Jesus Christ hath promised us better things, though many are so unwise as not to believe him, even to guide us by his own unerring Spirit, and hath rent and removed the veil, whereby not only one, and that once a year, may enter; but all of us, at all times, have access unto him, as often as we draw near unto him with pure hearts: he reveals his will to us by his Spirit, and writes his laws in our hearts.

THE THIRD argument is from these words of John, 1 John ii. ver. 27, "But the anointing, which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things,

Digitized by Google

and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

This could not be any special, peculiar, or extraordinary privilege, but that which is common to all the saints, it being a general epistle, directed to all them of that age. The apostle proposeth this anointing in them, as a more certain touchstone for them to discern and try seducers by, even than his own writings; for having in the former verse said, that he had written some things to them concerning such as seduced them, he begins the next verse, "But the anointing," etc., "and ye need not that any man teach you," etc., which infers, that having said to them what can be said, he refers them for all to the inward anointing, which teacheth all things, as the most firm, constant, and certain bulwark against all seducers. It is a lasting and continuing thing; the anointing which abideth. If it had not been to abide in them, it could not have taught them all things, neither guarded them against all hazard.

THE MOST usual objection to these doctrines is, That these revelations are uncertain.

But it is one thing to affirm, that the true and undoubted revelation of God's Spirit is certain and infallible; and another thing to affirm, that this or that particular person or people is led infallibly by this revelation in what they speak or write, because they affirm themselves to be so led by the inward and immediate revelation of the Spirit. The first only is asserted by us, the latter may be called in question. The question is not, who are or are not so led, but whether all ought not or may not be so led?

Digitized by Google

Seeing then we have already proved that Christ hath promised his Spirit to lead his children, and that every one of them both ought and may be led by it, if any depart from this certain guide in deeds, and yet in words pretend to be led by it into things that are not good, it will not from thence follow, that the true guidance of the Spirit is uncertain, or ought not to be followed; no more than it will follow that the sun showeth not light, because a blind man, or one who wilfully shuts his eyes, falls into a ditch at noon-day for want of light; or that no words are spoken, because a deaf man hears them not; or that a garden full of fragrant flowers has no sweet smell, because he that has lost his smelling doth not smell it; the fault then is in the organ, and not in the object.

These divine and inward revelations, which we establish as absolutely necessary for the founding of the true faith, as they do not, so neither can they, at any time contradict the Scripture's testimony, or sound reason. Besides the intrinsic and undoubted truth of this assertion, we can boldly affirm it from our certain and blessed experience. For this Spirit never deceived us, never moved us to any thing that was amiss; but is clear and manifest in its revelations, which are evidently discerned by us, as we wait in that pure and undefiled light of God, that proper and fit organ in which they are received.

Therefore if any reason after this manner, That because some ungodly men have committed wicked actions, and have yet more wickedly asserted, that they were led into these things by the Spirit of God; therefore, no man

Digitized by Google

ought to lean to the Spirit of God, or seek to be led by it, I utterly deny the consequence, which, were it to be received as true, then would all faith in God and hope of salvation become uncertain, and the Christian religion be turned into mere scepticism.

For after the same manner I might reason thus: Because Eve was deceived by the lying of the serpent, therefore she ought not to have trusted to the promise of God: that because the old world was deluded by evil spirits, therefore ought neither Noah, nor Abraham, nor Moses, to have trusted the Spirit of the Lord: that because a lying spirit spake through the four hundred prophets that persuaded Ahab to go up and fight at Ramoth Gilead, therefore the testimony of the true Spirit in Micaiah was uncertain, and dangerous to be followed.

They argue very ill, who despise and reject any principle because men pretending to be led by it do evil; in case it be not the natural and consequential tendency of that principle to lead unto those things that are evil. And for my part, as I have never a whit the lower esteem of the blessed testimony of the holy scriptures, nor do the less respect any solid tradition, that is answerable and according to truth; neither at all despise reason, that noble and excellent faculty of the mind, because wicked men have abused the name of them, to cover their wickedness, and deceive the simple; so would I not have any reject or doubt the certainty of that unerring Spirit which God hath given his children, as that which can alone guide them into all truth, because some have falsely pretended to it.

Digitized by Google

Because the Spirit of God is the fountain of all truth and sound reason, therefore we have well said, That it cannot contradict either the testimony of the scripture, or right reason. Yet it will not from thence follow, that these divine revelations are to be subjected to the examination either of the outward testimony of scripture, or of the human or natural reason of man, as to a more noble and certain rule or touchstone; for the divine revelation and inward illumination irresistibly moves the understanding to assent by its own evidence and clearness.

Through all the scriptures we may observe, that the manifestation and revelation of God by his Spirit to the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, was immediate as is above proved; which they did not examine by any other principle, but their own evidence and clearness.

To say that the Spirit of God has less evidence upon the mind of man than natural principles have, is to have too mean and too low thoughts of it. How comes David to invite us to taste and see that God is good, if this cannot be felt and tasted? This were enough to overturn the faith and assurance of all the saints, both now and of old. How came Paul to be persuaded, that nothing could separate him from the love of God, but by that evidence and clearness which the Spirit of God gave him? The apostle John, who knew well wherein the certainty of faith consisted, judged it in no ways absurd, without further argument, to ascribe his knowledge and assurance, and that of all the saints, hereunto in these words; "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of

Digitized by Google

his Spirit," 1 John iv. 13. And again, chap. v., ver. 6: "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."

Observe the reason brought by him, "Because the Spirit is truth;" of whose certainty and infallibility I have heretofore spoken. We then trust to and confide in this Spirit, because we know, and certainly believe, that it can only lead us aright, and never mislead us; and from this certain confidence it is that we affirm, that no revelation coming from it can ever contradict the scripture's testimony nor right reason. Yet those that have their spiritual senses, and can savor the things of the Spirit, as it were in prima instantia, i. e., at the first blush, can discern them without, or before they apply them either to scripture or reason.

I SHALL add one argument to prove that this inward, immediate revelation, which we have pleaded for all along, is the only sure and unmovable foundation of all Christian faith; which argument, when well considered, I hope will have weight with all sorts of Christians, and it is this:

That which all professors of Christianity, of what kind soever, are forced ultimately to recur unto, when pressed to the last; that for which all other foundations are recommended, and accounted worthy to be believed, and without which they are granted to be of no weight at all, must needs be the only true and unmovable foundation of all Christian faith.

And first, As to the Papists, they place their foundation in the judgment of the church and tradition. If we press them to say, Why they believe as the church doth? their answer is, Because the church is always led by the infalli-

Digitized by Google

ble Spirit. So here the leading of the Spirit is the utmost foundation. Again, if we ask them, Why we ought to trust tradition? they answer, Because these traditions were delivered us by the doctors and fathers of the church; which doctors and fathers, by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, commanded the church to observe them. Here again all ends in the revelation of the Spirit.

And for the Protestants and Socinians, both which acknowledge the scriptures to be the foundation and rule of their faith; the one as influenced by the Spirit of God to use them, the other as managing them with and by their own reason; ask both, or either of them, Why they trust in the scriptures, and take them to be their rule? Their answer is, Because we have in them the mind of God delivered unto us by those to whom these things were inwardly and immediately revealed by the Spirit of God; and not because this or that man wrote them, but because the Spirit of God dictated them.

It is strange then that men should render that so uncertain and dangerous to follow, upon which alone the certain ground and foundation of their own faith is built; and that they should shut themselves out from that holy fellowship with God, which only is enjoyed in the Spirit, in which we are commanded both to walk and live.

If any reading these things find themselves moved, by the strength of these scripture arguments, to assent and believe such revelations necessary, and yet find themselves strangers to them, let them know, that it is not because it is ceased to become the privilege of every true Christian

Digitized by Google

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
A71.698

Digitized by Google

THE work [illegible]
styled

AN APOL[illegible]
BEING A [illegible]
OF TH[illegible]
THE
[illegible]

In his address [illegible]

"Forasmuch [illegible]
to myself, is [illegible]
service wherein [illegible]
and all that is [illegible]
for its sake, by [illegible]
not attempt.

"I have not sought [illegible]
itching ears, who [illegible]
heads the sublime [illegible]

Digitized by Google

that they do not feel it, but rather because they are not so much Christians by nature as by name; and let such know that the secret light which shines in the heart, and reproves unrighteousness, is the small beginning of the revelation of God's Spirit, which was first sent into the world to reprove it of sin, John xvi. 8. And as by forsaking iniquity thou comest to be acquainted with that heavenly voice in thy heart, thou shalt feel, as the old man, or the natural man, that savoreth not the things of God's kingdom, is put off, with his evil and corrupt affections and lusts; I say, thou shalt feel the new man, or the spiritual birth and babe raised, which hath its spiritual senses, and can see, feel, and taste the things of the Spirit; but till then the knowledge of things spiritual is but as an historical faith. But as the description of the light of the sun, or of curious colors to a blind man, who, though of the largest capacity, cannot so well understand it by the most acute and lively description, as a child can by seeing them; so neither can the natural man, of the largest capacity, by the best words, even scripture words, so well understand the mysteries of God's kingdom, as the least and weakest child who tasteth them, by having them revealed inwardly by the Spirit.

Wait then for this in the small revelation of that pure light which first reveals things more known; and as thou becomest fitted for it, thou shalt receive more and more, and by a living experience easily refute their ignorance, who ask, How dost thou know that thou art actuated by the Spirit of God? Which will appear to thee like asking one whose eyes are open, how he knows the sun shines at noon-day?

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION III.

CONCERNING THE SCRIPTURES.

FROM these revelations of the Spirit of God to the saints have proceeded the Scriptures of Truth, which contain,

I. A faithful historical account of the actings of God's people in divers ages; with many singular and remarkable providences attending them.

II. A prophetical account of several things, whereof some are already past and some yet to come.

III. A full and ample account of all the chief principles of the doctrine of Christ, held forth in divers precious declarations, exhortations, and sentences, which, by the moving of God's Spirit, were at several times, and upon sundry occasions, spoken and written unto some churches and their pastors.

Nevertheless, because they are only a declaration of the fountain, and not the fountain itself, therefore they are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners. Yet because they give a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they

Digitized by Google

have all their excellency and certainty; for as by the inward testimony of the Spirit we do alone truly know them, so they testify, That the Spirit is that Guide by which the saints are led into all Truth; therefore, according to the scriptures, the Spirit is the first and principal leader. Seeing then that we do therefore receive and believe the scriptures because they proceeded from the Spirit, for the very same reason is the Spirit more originally and principally the rule.

John xvi. 13. Rom. viii. 14.

In that which we affirm of the holy scriptures, it doth appear at what high rate we value them, accounting them the most excellent writings in the world; to which not only no other writings are to be preferred, but even in divers respects not comparable thereto. There wants not a majesty in the style, a coherence in the parts, a good scope in the whole; but seeing these things are not discerned by the natural, but only by the spiritual man, it is the Spirit of God that must give us that belief of the scriptures which may satisfy our consciences.

Though then we do acknowledge the scriptures to be very heavenly and divine writings, the use of them to be very comfortable and necessary to the church of Christ, and that we also admire and give praise to the Lord, for his wonderful providence in preserving these writings so pure and uncorrupted as we have them, through so long a night of apostacy, to be a testimony of his truth against the wickedness and abominations even of those whom he

Digitized by Google

made instrumental in preserving them, so that they have kept them to be a witness against themselves; yet we may not call them the principal fountain of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the first adequate rule of faith and manners; because the principal fountain of truth must be the Truth itself; i. e., that whose certainty and authority depends not upon another. When we doubt of the streams of any river or flood, we recur to the fountain itself; and, having found it, there we desist, we can go no farther; because there it springs out of the bowels of the earth, which are inscrutable.

But the scriptures' authority and certainty depend upon the Spirit by which they were dictated; and the reason why they were received as truth is, because they proceeded from the Spirit: therefore they are not the principal ground of truth.

If by the Spirit we come to the true knowledge of God; if by the Spirit we are to be led into all truth, and so be taught of all things; then the Spirit, and not the scriptures, is the foundation and ground of all truth and knowledge, and the primary rule of faith and manners.

The very nature of the gospel itself declareth that the scriptures cannot be the only and chief rule of Christians, else there should be no difference betwixt the law and the gospel. But herein doth the law and the gospel differ, in that the law, being outwardly written, brings under condemnation, but hath not life in it to save; whereas the gospel, as it declares and makes manifest the evil, so, being an inward powerful thing, it gives power also to obey, and delivers from the evil. Hence it is called Εὐαγγέλιον, which

Digitized by Google

is glad tidings. The law or letter, which is without us, kills; but the gospel, which is the inward spiritual law, gives life; for it consists not so much in words as in virtue. Wherefore such as come to know it, and be acquainted with it, come to feel greater power over their iniquities than all outward laws or rules can give them. Hence the apostle concludes, Rom. vi. 14, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." This grace then that is inward, and not an outward law, is to be the rule of Christians. Hereunto the apostle commends the elders of the church, saying, Acts xx. 32, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." He doth not commend them here to outward laws or writings, but to the word of grace, which is inward; even the spiritual law, which makes free, as he elsewhere affirms, Rom. viii. 2, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." This spiritual law is that which the apostle declares he preached and directed people unto, which was not outward, as by Rom. x. 8, is manifest; where distinguishing it from the law, he saith, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the word of faith which we preach."

The principal rule of Christians under the gospel is not an outward letter, nor law outwardly written and delivered, but an inward spiritual law, engraven in the heart, the law of the Spirit of life, the word that is nigh in the heart and in the mouth.

Digitized by Google

THAT WHICH is given to Christians for a rule and guide, must needs be so full, that it may clearly and distinctly guide and order them in all things and occurrences that may fall out. But there are numberless things which particular Christians may be concerned in, for which there can be no particular rule had in the scriptures. I shall give an instance in two or three particulars to prove this.

As for instance, some are called to the ministry of the word: Paul saith, There was a necessity upon him to preach the gospel; woe unto me, if I preach not. If it be necessary that there be now ministers of the church, as well as then, then there is the same necessity upon some, more than upon others to occupy this place; which necessity, as it may be incumbent upon particular persons, the scripture neither doth nor can declare.

If it be said, That the qualifications of a minister are found in the scripture, and by applying these qualifications to myself, I may know whether I be fit for such a place or not; I answer, The qualifications of a bishop, or minister, as they are mentioned both in the epistle to Timothy and Titus, are such as may be found in a private Christian; yea, which ought in some measure to be in every true Christian: so that this giveth a man no certainty. Every capacity to an office giveth me not a sufficient call to it.

Next again, By what rule shall I judge if I be so qualified? How do I know that I am sober, meek, holy, harmless? Is it not the testimony of the Spirit in my conscience that must assure me hereof? And suppose that I was qualified and called, yet what scripture rule shall inform me,

Digitized by Google

whether it be my duty to preach in this or that place, in France or England, Holland or Germany? Whether I shall take up my time in confirming the faithful, reclaiming heretics, or converting infidels, as also in writing epistles to this or that church?

The general rules of the scripture, viz., To be diligent in my duty, to do all to the glory of God, and for the good of his church, can give me no light in this thing. If Paul, when his face was turned by the Lord toward Jerusalem, had gone back to Achaia, or Macedonia, he might have supposed he could have done God more acceptable service, in preaching and confirming the churches, than in being shut up in prison in Judea; but would God have been pleased herewith? Nay certainly. Obedience is better than sacrifice; and it is not our doing that which is good simply that pleaseth God, but that good which he willeth us to do.

Every member hath its particular place in the body, as the Apostle showeth, 1 Cor. xii. If then, I being the foot, should offer to exercise the office of the hand; or being the hand, that of the tongue; my service would be troublesome, and not acceptable; and instead of helping the body, I should make a schism in it. So that that which is good for another to do, may be sinful to me: for as masters will have their servants to obey them, according to their good pleasure, and not only in blindly doing that which may seem to them to tend to their master's profit, whereby it may chance, the master having business both in the field and in the house, that the servant that knows not his mas-

Digitized by Google

ter's will may go to the field, when it is the mind of the master he should stay and do the business of the house, would not this servant then deserve a reproof, for not answering his master's mind? And what master is so careless as, having many servants, to leave them in such disorder as not to assign each his particular station, and not only the general terms of doing that which is profitable? which would leave them in various doubts, and no doubt end in confusion.

Shall we then dare to ascribe unto Christ, in the ordering of his church and servants, that which in man might justly be accounted disorder and confusion? The apostle showeth this distinction well, Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us; whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." Now what scripture rule showeth me that I ought to exhort, rather than prophesy? or to minister, rather than teach? Surely none at all. Many more difficulties of this kind occur in the life of a Christian.

Moreover, that which of all things is most needful for him to know, to wit, whether he really be in the faith, and an heir of salvation, or not, the scripture can give him no certainty in, neither can it be a rule to him. That this knowledge is exceeding desirable and comfortable all do unanimously acknowledge; besides that it is especially commanded, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves; know ye not

Digitized by Google

your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" And 2 Pet. i. 10, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Now I say, What scripture rule can assure me that I have true faith? That my calling and election is sure?

If it be said, By comparing the scripture marks of true faith with mine: I demand, Wherewith shall I make this observation? What shall ascertain me that I am not mistaken? If it be said, My own heart:

How unfit a judge is it in its own case? And how like to be partial, especially if it be yet unrenewed? Doth not the scripture say, that "it is deceitful above all things"? I find the promises, I find the threatenings, in the scripture; but who telleth me that the one belongs to me more than the other? The scripture gives me a mere declaration of these things, but makes no application.

The scripture itself, wherein we are so earnestly pressed to seek after this assurance, doth not at all affirm itself a rule sufficient to give it, but wholly ascribeth it to the Spirit, as Rom. viii. 16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." 1 John iv. 13, "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit;" and chap v. 6, "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."

LASTLY, That cannot be the only, principal, nor chief rule, which doth not universally reach every individual that needeth it, to produce the necessary effect; and from the use of which, either by some innocent defect, or natu-

Digitized by Google

ral imperfection, many who are within the compass of the visible church are necessarily excluded, and that either wholly, or at least from the immediate use thereof. But it so falls out frequently concerning the scriptures, in the case of deaf people, children, and idiots, who can by no means have the benefit of the scriptures. Shall we then affirm, that they are without any rule to Godward, or that they are all damned? As such an opinion is inconsistent both with the justice and mercy of God, so I know no sound reason can be alleged for it. Now if we may suppose any such to be under the new covenant dispensation, as I know none will deny but that we may, we cannot suppose them without some rule and means of knowledge; seeing it is expressly affirmed, "They shall be all taught of God." John vi. 45. "For all shall know me from the least to the greatest," Heb. viii. 11.

Though we were rid of this difficulty, how many illiterate and yet good men are there in the church of God who cannot read a letter in their own mother tongue? These can have no immediate knowledge of the rule of their faith; so their faith must needs depend upon the credit of other men's reading or relating it unto them; where either the altering, adding, or omitting of a little word may be a foundation in the poor hearer of a very dangerous mistake, whereby he may either continue in some iniquity ignorantly, or believe a lie confidently.

But further; suppose all could read the scriptures in their own language; where is there one of a thousand that hath that thorough knowledge of the original languages in

Digitized by Google

which they are written, so as in that respect immediately to receive the benefit of them? Must not all these here depend upon the honesty and faithfulness of the interpreters? Which how uncertain it is for a man to build his faith upon, the many corrections and amendments, which even among Protestants have been used, doth sufficiently declare. And that even the last translations need to be corrected, learned men do confess.

But last of all, there is no less difficulty occurs even to those skilled in the original languages, who depend upon the honesty and credit of the transcribers, since the original copies are granted by all not to be now extant. Of which transcribers Jerome in his time complained, saying, That they wrote not what they found, but what they understood. And Epiphanius saith, That in the good and correct copies of Luke it was written, that Christ wept, and that Irenæus doth cite it; but that the Catholics blotted it out, fearing lest heretics should have abused it. Other fathers also declare, That whole verses were taken out of Mark, because of the Manichees.

But further, the various readings of the Hebrew character by reason of the points, which some plead for, as coeval with the first writings, which others, with no less probability, allege to be a later invention; the disagreement of divers citations of Christ and the apostles with those passages in the Old Testament they appeal to; the great controversy among the fathers, whereof some highly approve the Greek Septuagint, decrying and rendering very doubtful the Hebrew copy, as in many places vitiated

Digitized by Google

and altered by the Jews; other some, and particularly Jerome, exalting the certainty of the Hebrew, and rejecting, yea, even deriding the history of the Septuagint, which the primitive church chiefly made use of; and the many various readings in divers copies of the Greek, and the great altercations among the fathers of the first three centuries, who had greater opportunity to be better informed than we can now lay claim to, concerning the books to be admitted or rejected, as has been above observed: all these and much more which might be alleged, put the minds even of the learned into infinite doubts, scruples, and inextricable difficulties. Whence we may very safely conclude, that Jesus Christ, who promised to be always with his children, to lead them into all truth, to guard them against the devices of the enemy, and to establish their faith upon an unmovable rock, left them not to be principally ruled by that, which was subject in itself to many uncertainties: and therefore he gave them his Spirit, as their principal guide, which neither moths nor time can wear out, nor transcribers nor translators corrupt; which none are so young, none so illiterate, none in so remote a place, but they may come to be reached, and rightly informed by it.

Through and by the clearness which that Spirit gives us it is, that we are only best rid of those difficulties that occur to us concerning the scriptures. The real and undoubted experience whereof I myself have been a witness of, with great admiration of the love of God to his children in these latter days: for I have known some of my

Digitized by Google

friends, who profess the same faith with me, faithful servants of the Most High God, and full of divine knowledge of his truth, as it was immediately and inwardly revealed to them by the Spirit, who not only were ignorant of the Greek and Hebrew, but even some of them could not read their own language, who being pressed by their adversaries with some citations out of the English translation, and finding them to disagree with the manifestation of truth in their own hearts, have boldly affirmed the Spirit of God never said so, and that it was certainly wrong; for they did not believe that any of the holy prophets or apostles had ever written so; which when I on this account seriously examined, I really found to be errors and corruptions of the translators; who, as in most translations, do not so much give us the genuine signification of the words, as strain them to express that which comes nearest to that opinion they have of truth.

If it be then asked me, Whether I think hereby to render the scriptures uncertain, or useless? I answer; Not at all. The proposition itself declares how much I esteem them; and provided that to the Spirit from which they came be but granted that place the scriptures themselves give it, I do freely concede to the scriptures the second place, even whatsoever they say of themselves; which the apostle Paul chiefly mentions in two places, Rom. xv. 4: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17: The holy scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through

Digitized by Google

faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable — for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

For though God doth principally and chiefly lead us by his Spirit, yet he sometimes conveys his comfort and consolation to us through his children, whom he raises up and inspires to speak or write a word in season, whereby the saints are made instruments in the hand of the Lord to strengthen and encourage one another, which doth also tend to perfect and make them wise unto salvation; and such as are led by the Spirit cannot neglect, but do naturally love, and are wonderfully cherished by that which proceedeth from the same Spirit in another; because such mutual emanations of the heavenly life tend to quicken the mind when at any time it is overtaken with heaviness. Peter himself declares this to have been the end of his writing, 2 Pet. i. 12, 13: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth; yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance."

God is teacher of his people himself; and there is nothing more express, than that such as are under the new covenant, need no man to teach them: yet it was a fruit of Christ's ascension to send teachers and pastors for perfecting of the saints. So that the same work is ascribed to the scriptures as to teachers; the one to make the man of God perfect, the other for the perfection of the saints.

Digitized by Google

As then teachers are not to go before the teaching of God himself under the new covenant, but to follow after it; neither are they to rob us of that great privilege which Christ hath purchased unto us by his blood; so neither is the scripture to go before the teaching of the Spirit.

God hath seen meet that herein we should, as in a looking-glass, see the conditions and experiences of the saints of old; that finding our experience answer to theirs, we might thereby be the more confirmed and comforted, and our hope of obtaining the same end strengthened; that observing the providences attending them, seeing the snares they were liable to, and beholding their deliverances, we may thereby be made wise unto salvation, and seasonably reproved and instructed in righteousness.

This is the great work of the scriptures, and their service to us, that we may witness them fulfilled in us, and so discern the stamp of God's spirit and ways upon them, by the inward acquaintance we have with the same Spirit and work in our hearts. The prophecies of the scriptures are also very comfortable and profitable unto us, as the same Spirit enlightens us to observe them fulfilled, and to be fulfilled; for in all this it is to be observed, that it is only the spiritual man that can make a right use of them: they are able to make the man of God perfect, so it is not the natural man; and whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our comfort, [our] that are the believers, [our] that are the saints; concerning such the apostle speaks: for as for the others, the apostle Peter plainly declares, that the unstable and unlearned wrest them to their own destruction:

Digitized by Google

these were they that were unlearned in the divine and heavenly learning of the Spirit, not in human and school literature: in which we may safely presume that Peter himself, being a fisherman, had no skill.

In this respect above mentioned, then, we have shown what service and use the holy scriptures, as managed in and by the Spirit, are of to the church of God; wherefore we do account them a secondary rule. Moreover, because they are commonly acknowledged by all to have been written by the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and that the errors which may be supposed by the injury of times to have slipped in, are not such but that there is a sufficient clear testimony left to all the essentials of the Christian faith; we do look upon them as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians; and that whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto their testimony, may therefore justly be rejected as false. And for our parts, we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them; which we never refused, nor ever shall, in all controversies with our adversaries, as the judge and test. We shall also be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, That whatsoever any do, pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil. For as we never lay claim to the Spirit's leadings, that we may cover ourselves in any thing that is evil; so we know, that as every evil contradicts the scriptures, so it doth also the Spirit in the first place, from which the scriptures came, and whose motions can never contradict one another, though they may

Digitized by Google

appear sometimes to be contradictory to the blind eye of the natural man, as Paul and James seem to contradict one another.

THUS FAR we have shown both what we believe, and what we believe not, concerning the holy scriptures, hoping we have given them their due place. But they that will have them to be the only, certain, and principal rule, object John v. 39, "Search the scriptures," etc. Here, say they, we are commanded, by Christ himself, to search the scriptures.

That the scriptures ought to be searched, we do not at all deny; but are very willing to be tried by them, as hath been above declared: but the question is, Whether they be the only and principal rule? Which this is so far from proving, that it proveth the contrary; for Christ checks them here for too high an esteem of the scriptures, and neglecting of him that was to be preferred before them, and to whom they bore witness, as the following words declare; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me: and ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." This shows, that while they thought they had eternal life in the scriptures, they neglected to come unto Christ to have life, of which the scriptures bore witness. This answers well to our purpose, since our adversaries now do also exalt the scriptures, and think to have life in them; which is no more than to look upon them as the only principal rule and way to life, and yet refuse to come unto the Spirit of which they testify, even the inward spiritual law, which could

Digitized by Google

give them life. Moreover, that place may be taken in the indicative mood, Ye search the scriptures; which interpretation the Greek word will bear, and so Pasor translateth it: which by the reproof following seemeth also to be the more genuine interpretation, as Cyrillus long ago hath observed.

ANOTHER objection is from these words, Acts xvii. 11, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

But that the scriptures either are the principal or only rule, will not at all follow from this; for we recommend and approve the use of them in that respect as much as any; yet will it not follow, that we affirm them to be the principal and only rule.

It is to be observed also that these were the Jews of Berea, to whom these scriptures, which were the law and the prophets, were more particularly a rule; and the thing under examination was, whether the birth, life, works, and sufferings of Christ, did answer to the prophecies concerning him; so that it was most proper for them, being Jews, to examine the apostle's doctrine by the scriptures; seeing he pleaded it to be a fulfilling of them. It is said, nevertheless, in the first place, That "they received the word with cheerfulness;" and in the second place, "They searched the scriptures:" not that they searched the scriptures, and then received the word; for then could they not have prevailed to convert them, had they not first minded

Digitized by Google

the word abiding in them, which opened their understandings; no more than the Scribes and Pharisees, who searched the scriptures and exalted them, and yet remained in their unbelief, because they had not the word abiding in them.

If this commendation of the Jewish Bereans might infer that the scriptures were the only and principal rule to try the apostle's doctrine by, what should have become of the Gentiles? How should they ever have come to have received the faith of Christ, who neither knew the scriptures, nor believed them? We see in the end of the same chapter, how the apostle, preaching to the Athenians, took another method, and directed them to somewhat of God within themselves, that they might feel after him. He did not go about to proselyte them to the Jewish religion, and to the belief of the law and the prophets, and from thence to prove the coming of Christ; nay, he took a nearer way. The apostle to the Athenians used a testimony of one of their own poets, which he judged would have credit with them; and no doubt such testimonies, whose authors they esteemed, had more weight with them than all the sayings of Moses, and the prophets, whom they neither knew nor would have cared for. Now because the apostle used the testimony of a poet to the Athenians, will it therefore follow he made that the principal or only rule to try his doctrine by? So neither will it follow, that though he made use of the scriptures to the Jews, as being a principle already believed by them, to try his doctrine, that from thence the scriptures may be accounted the principal or only rule.

Digitized by Google

THAT WHICH at first view seems to be the greatest objection is this: If the scripture be not the adequate, principal, and only rule, then it would follow that the scripture is not complete, nor the canon filled; that if men be now immediately led and ruled by the Spirit, they may add new scriptures of equal authority with the old; whereas every one that adds is cursed: yea, what assurance have we, but at this rate every one may bring in a new gospel according to his fancy?

I answer; We have shut the door upon all such doctrine in affirming, That the scriptures give a full and ample testimony to all the principal doctrines of the Christian faith. For we do firmly believe that there is no other gospel or doctrine to be preached, but that which was delivered by the apostles; and do freely subscribe to that saying, Let him that preacheth any other gospel, than that which hath been already preached by the apostles, and according to the scriptures, be accursed. Gal. i. 8.

So we distinguish betwixt a revelation of a new gospel and new doctrines, and a new revelation of the good old gospel and doctrines; the last we plead for, but the first we utterly deny. For we firmly believe, That no other foundation can any man lay, than that which is laid already. But that this revelation is necessary we have already proved; and this distinction doth sufficiently guard us against the hazard insinuated in the objection.

As to the scriptures being a filled canon, I see no necessity of believing it. And if these men, that believe the scriptures to be the only rule, will be consistent with their

Digitized by Google

own doctrine, they must needs be of my judgment; seeing it is simply impossible to prove the canon by the scriptures. For it cannot be found in any book of the scriptures, that these books, and just these, and no other, are canonical, as all are forced to acknowledge.

If they should allege; That the admitting of any other books to be now written by the same Spirit might infer the admission of new doctrines; I deny that consequence; for the principal or fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion are contained in the tenth part of the scripture; but it will not follow thence that the rest are impertinent or useless. If it should please God to bring to us any of those books, which by the injury of time are lost, which are mentioned in the scripture; as, The Prophecy of Enoch; the Book of Nathan, etc., or, the Third Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians; I see no reason why we ought not to receive them, and place them with the rest. That which displeaseth me is, that men should first affirm that the scripture is the only and principal rule, and yet make a great article of faith of that which the scripture can give us no light in.

As for instance: How shall a Protestant prove by scripture, to such as deny the Epistle of James to be authentic, that it ought to be received? If he would say, Because it contradicts not the rest; it would as well follow, that every writer that contradicts not the scripture, should be put into the canon; and thus they would equal every one the writings of their own sect with the scriptures; for I suppose they judge their own confession of faith doth not con-

Digitized by Google

tradict the scriptures: Will it therefore follow that it should be bound up with the Bible? And yet it seems impossible, according to their principles, to bring any better argument to prove the Epistle of James to be authentic. There is then this unavoidable necessity to say, We know it by the same Spirit from which it was written; or otherwise to step back to Rome, and say, We know by tradition that the church hath declared it to be canonical; and the church is infallible.

And lastly, As to these words, Rev. xxii. 18, That "if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book;" I desire they will show me how it relates to any thing else than to that particular prophecy. It saith not, Now the canon of the scriptures is filled up, no man is to write more from the Spirit; yea, do not all confess that there have been prophecies and true prophets since? But, moreover, the same was in effect commanded long before, Prov. xxx. 6, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar:" Yet how many books of the prophets were written after? And the same was said by Moses, Deut. iv. 2, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you; neither shall ye diminish aught from it." So that, though we should extend that of the revelation beyond the particular prophecy of that book, it cannot be understood but of a new gospel, or new doctrines; or of restraining man's spirit, that he mix not his human words with the divine; and not of a new revelation of the old, as we have said before.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION IV.

CONCERNING THE CONDITION OF MAN IN THE FALL

ALL Adam's posterity, or mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, as to the first Adam or earthly man, is fallen, degenerated, and dead; deprived of the sensation or feeling of this inward testimony or seed of God; and is subject unto the power, nature, and seed of the serpent, which he soweth in men's hearts, while they abide in this natural and corrupted estate: from whence it comes, that not only their words and deeds, but all their imaginations, are evil perpetually in the sight of God, as proceeding from this depraved and wicked seed. Man therefore, as he is in this state, can know nothing aright; yea, his thoughts and conceptions concerning God and things spiritual, until he be disjoined from this evil seed, and united to the Divine Light, are unprofitable both to himself and others. Nevertheless, this seed is not imputed to infants, until by transgression they actually join themselves therewith; for those are by nature "the children of wrath," who walk according to the "power of the prince of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," having their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

Rom. v. 12. 15.

Eph. ii.

Digitized by Google

HITHERTO we have discoursed how the true knowledge of God is attained and preserved; also of what use and service the holy scripture is to the saints. We come now to examine the state of man as he stands in the fall; what his capacity and power is; and how far he is able, as of himself, to advance in relation to the things of God.

NOT TO dive into the many curious notions which many have concerning the condition of Adam before the fall, all agree in this: That thereby he came to a very great loss, not only in the things which related to the outward man, but in regard of that true fellowship and communion he had with God. This loss was signified unto him in the command, "For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17. This death could not be an outward death, or the dissolution of the outward man; for as to that, he did not die yet many hundred years after; so that it must needs respect his spiritual life and communion with God. The consequence of this fall, besides that which relates to the fruits of the earth, is also expressed, Gen. iii. 24, "So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Now whatsoever literal signification this may have, we may safely ascribe to this paradise a mystical signification, and truly account it that spiritual communion and fellowship, which the saints obtain with God by Jesus Christ; to whom only these cherubims give way, and unto as many as enter by him, who calls himself the Door. So that, though we do not ascribe any whit of Adam's guilt

Digitized by Google

to men, until they make it theirs by the like acts of disobedience; yet we cannot suppose that men, who are come of Adam naturally, can have any good thing in their nature, as belonging to it; which he, from whom they derive their nature, had not himself to communicate unto them.

If then we may affirm, that Adam did not retain in his nature (as belonging thereunto) any will or light capable to give him knowledge in spiritual things, then neither can his posterity; for whatsoever real good any man doth, it proceedeth not from his nature, as he is man, or the son of Adam; but from the seed of God in him, as a new visitation of life, in order to bring him out of this natural condition: so that, though it be in him, yet it is not of him; and this the Lord himself witnessed, Gen. vi. 5, where it is said, he "saw that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The Lord expressed this again a little after, chap. viii. 21, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." But if man's thoughts be always and only evil, then are they altogether useless and ineffectual to him in the things of God.

This appears clearly from that saying of the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xvii. 9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." For who can with any color of reason imagine, that that which is so hath any power of itself, or is in any wise fit to lead a man to righteousness, whereunto it is of its own nature directly opposite? This is as contrary to reason, as it is impossible in nature that a stone, of its own nature and proper motion, should fly upwards: That which is "deceitful above all

Digitized by Google

things, and desperately wicked," is not fit, neither can it lead a man aright in things that are good and honest.

THIS EVIL and corrupt seed is not imputed to infants until they actually join with it. For this there is a reason given in the end of the proposition itself, drawn from Eph. ii. For those are by nature children of wrath, who walk according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Here the apostle gives their evil walking, and not any thing that is not reduced to act, as a reason of their being "children of wrath." And this is suitable to the whole strain of the gospel, where no man is ever threatened or judged for what iniquity he hath not actually wrought: such indeed as continue in iniquity, and so do allow the sins of their fathers, God will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. Is it not strange then that men should entertain an opinion so cruel and contrary to the nature as well of God's mercy as justice, concerning which the scripture is altogether silent?

We confess that a seed of sin is transmitted to all men from Adam, although imputed to none, until by sinning they actually join with it; in which seed he gave occasion to all to sin, and it is the origin of all evil actions and thoughts in men's hearts. This seed of sin is frequently called death in the scripture, and the body of death; seeing indeed it is a death to the life of righteousness and holiness: therefore its seed and its product is called the old man, the old Adam, in which all sin is; for which cause we use this name to express this sin, and not that of original sin; of which phrase the scripture makes no mention.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITIONS V. AND VI.

CONCERNING THE UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION BY CHRIST, AND ALSO THE SAVING AND SPIRITUAL LIGHT WHEREWITH EVERY MAN IS ENLIGHTENED.

PROPOSITION V.

GOD, out of his infinite love, who delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but that all should live and be saved, hath so loved the world, that he hath given his only Son a Light, that whosoever believeth in him shall be saved, John iii. 16, who enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, John i. 9, and maketh manifest all things that are reprovable, Ephes. v. 13, and teacheth all temperance, righteousness, and godliness; and his Light enlighteneth the hearts of all for a time, in order to salvation; and this is it which reproves the sin of all individuals, and would work out the salvation of all if not resisted. Nor is it less universal than the seed of sin, being the purchase of his death, who tasted death for every man: for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

Ezek. xviii. 32 & xxxiii. 11.

PROPOSITION VI.

ACCORDING to which principle all the objections against the universality of Christ's death are easily solved; neither

Digitized by Google

is it needful to recur to the ministry of angels, and those other miraculous means which they say God useth to manifest the doctrine and history of Christ's passion unto such, who, living in parts of the world where the outward preaching of the gospel is unknown, have well improved the first and common grace. For as hence it well follows that some of the old philosophers might have been saved, so also may some, who by providence are cast into those remote parts of the world where the knowledge of the history is wanting, be made partakers of the divine mystery, if they receive and resist not that grace, a manifestation whereof is given to every man to profit withal. This most certain doctrine being then received, that there is an evangelical and saving light and grace in all, the universality of the love and mercy of God towards mankind, both in the death of his beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the manifestation of the light in the heart, is established and confirmed, against all the objections of such as deny it. Therefore Christ hath tasted death for every man; not only for all kinds of men, as some vainly talk, but for every man of all kinds; the benefit of whose offering is not only extended to such who have the distinct outward knowledge of his death and sufferings, as the same is declared in the scriptures, but even unto those who are necessarily excluded from the benefit of this knowledge by some inevitable accident; which knowledge we willingly confess to be very profitable and comfortable, but not absolutely needful unto such from whom God himself hath withheld it; yet they may be made partakers of the

1 Cor. xii. 7.

Heb. ii. 9.

Digitized by Google

mystery of his death, though ignorant of the history, if they suffer his seed and light, enlightening their hearts, to take place; in which light, communion with the Father and the Son is enjoyed; so as of wicked men to become holy, and lovers of that power, by whose inward and secret touches they feel themselves turned from the evil to the good, and learn to do to others as they would be done by, in which Christ himself affirms all to be included. As they have then falsely and erroneously taught, who have denied Christ to have died for all men: so neither have they sufficiently taught the truth, who, affirming him to have died for all, have added the absolute necessity of the outward knowledge thereof, in order to obtain its saving effect. Many asserters of universal redemption have been wanting, in that they have not placed the extent of this salvation in that divine and evangelical principle of light and life wherewith Christ hath enlightened every man that cometh into the world, which is excellently and evidently held forth in these scriptures, Gen. vi. 3; Deut. xxx. 14; John i. 7, 8, 9, 16; Rom. x. 8; Titus ii. 11.

HITHERTO we have considered man's fallen, lost, corrupted, and degenerated condition. Now it is fit to inquire how, and by what means he may come to be freed out of this miserable and depraved condition, which in these two propositions is declared and demonstrated; which I thought meet to place together because of their affinity, the one being as it were an explanation of the other.

Digitized by Google

As for that doctrine which these propositions chiefly strike at, to wit, absolute reprobation, according to which some are not afraid to assert, That God, by an eternal and immutable decree, hath predestinated to eternal damnation the far greater part of mankind, without any respect to their disobedience or sin, but only for the demonstrating of the glory of his justice; and that for the bringing this about, he hath appointed these miserable souls necessarily to walk in their wicked ways, that so his justice may lay hold on them: and that God doth therefore not only suffer them to be liable to this misery in many parts of the world, by withholding from them the preaching of the gospel and the knowledge of Christ, but even in those places where the gospel is preached, and salvation by Christ is offered; whom though he publicly invite them, yet he justly condemns for disobedience, albeit he hath withheld from them all grace by which they could have laid hold of the gospel, viz.: Because he hath, by a secret will unknown to all men, ordained and decreed (without any respect had to their disobedience or sin) that they shall not obey, and that the offer of the gospel shall never prove effectual for their salvation, but only occasion their greater condemnation.

As to this horrible and blasphemous doctrine, our cause is common with many others, who have both wisely and learnedly, according to scripture, reason, and antiquity, refuted it. We may safely call this doctrine a novelty, seeing the first four hundred years after Christ there is no mention made of it. However, we should not oppugn it for the silence of the ancients, if we did observe it to have

Digitized by Google

any real bottom in the writings or sayings of Christ and the apostles, and that it were not highly injurious to God himself, to Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer, and to the power, virtue, nobility, and excellency of his blessed gospel, and lastly unto all mankind.

Having briefly removed this false doctrine which stood in my way, because they that are desirous may see it both learnedly and piously refuted by many others, I come to the matter of our proposition, which is, That "God out of his infinite love, who delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but that all should live and be saved, hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him might be saved;" which also is again affirmed in the sixth proposition, in these words, Christ then tasted death for every man, of all kinds.

THIS DOCTRINE of universal redemption, or Christ's dying for all men, is of itself so evident from the scripture testimony, that there is scarce found any other article of the Christian faith so frequently, so plainly, and so positively asserted. It is that which maketh the preaching of Christ to be truly termed the gospel, or an annunciation of glad tidings to all. Thus the angel declared the birth and coming of Christ to the shepherds to be, Luke ii. 10, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people:" he saith not, to a few. Now if this coming of Christ had not brought a possibility of salvation to all, it should rather have been accounted bad tidings of great sorrow to most people; neither should the angel have had reason to have sung, "Peace on earth, and good will to-

Digitized by Google

wards men," if the greatest part of mankind had been necessarily shut out from receiving any benefit by it. How should Christ have sent out his servants to "preach the gospel to every creature," Mark xvi. 15, (a very comprehensive commission,) that is, to every son and daughter of mankind, without all exception? He commands them to preach salvation to all, repentance and remission of sins to all; warning every one, and exhorting every one, as Paul did, Col. i. 28. Now how could they have preached the gospel to every man, as became the ministers of Jesus Christ, in much assurance, if salvation by that gospel had not been possible to all? What if some of those had asked them, or should now ask any of these doctors, who deny the universality of Christ's death, and yet preach it to all promiscuously, Hath Christ died for me? How can they, with confidence, give a certain answer to this question? If they give a conditional answer, as their principle obligeth them to do, and say, If thou repent, Christ hath died for thee; doth not the same question still recur? Hath Christ died for me, so as to make repentance possible to me? To this they can answer nothing, unless they run in a circle; whereas the feet of those that bring the glad tidings of the gospel of peace are said to be beautiful, for that they preach the common salvation, repentance unto all; offering a door of mercy and hope to all, through Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all. The gospel invites all; and certainly by the gospel Christ intended not to deceive and delude the greater part of mankind, when he invites and crieth, saying; "Come unto

Digitized by Google

me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." If all then ought to seek after him, and to look for salvation by him, he must needs have made salvation possible to all; for who is bound to seek after that which is impossible? Certainly it were a mocking of men to bid them do so. Seeing Christ, after he arose and perfected the work of our redemption, gave a commission to preach repentance, remission of sins, and salvation to all, it is manifest that he died for all. For, He that hath commissionated his servants thus to preach, is a God of truth, and no mocker of poor mankind; neither doth he require of any man that which is simply impossible for him to do: and seeing he is both a most righteous and merciful God, it cannot at all stand, either with his justice or mercy, to bid such men repent or believe, to whom it is impossible.

MOREOVER, if we regard the testimony of the scripture in this matter, where there is not one scripture, that I know of, which affirmeth Christ not to die for all, there are divers that positively and expressly assert, He did; as 1 Tim. ii. 1, 3, 4, 6: "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men," etc. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." He gives us a reason of his willingness that all men should be saved, in these words, "Who gave himself a ransom for all;" as if he would have said, Since Christ died for all, since he gave himself a ransom for all,

Digitized by Google

therefore he will have all men to be saved. This Christ himself gives as a reason of God's love to the world, in these words, John iii. 16: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" compared with 1 John iv. 9. This [whosoever] is an indefinite term, from which no man is excluded.

THIS IS very positively affirmed, Heb. ii. 9, in these words, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." For he came not "to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," John iii. 17. "He came not to judge the world, but to save the world," John xii. 47.

If he never came to bring salvation to the greater part of mankind, but that his coming, though it could never do them good, yet shall augment their condemnation; from thence it necessarily follows, that he came not of intention to save, but to judge and condemn the greater part of the world, contrary to his own express testimony; and as the apostle Paul, in the words above cited, doth assert affirmatively, That God willeth the salvation of all, so doth the apostle Peter assert negatively, That he willeth not the perishing of any, 2 Pet. iii. 9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And this is correspondent to that of the prophet Ezekiel, xxxiii. 11:

Digitized by Google

"As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." If it be safe to believe God, and trust in him, we must not think that he intends to cheat us by all these expressions through his servants, but that he was in good earnest. And that this will and desire of his hath not taken effect, the blame is on our parts, as shall be after spoken of; which could not be, if we never were in any capacity of salvation, or that Christ had never died for us, but left us under an impossibility of salvation. What mean all those earnest invitations, all those serious expostulations, all those regretting contemplations, wherewith the holy scriptures are full? As, Why will ye die, O house of Israel! Why will ye not come unto me, that ye might have life? I have waited to be gracious unto you: I have sought to gather you: I have knocked at the door of your hearts: Is not your destruction of yourselves? I have called all the day long.

This doctrine is abundantly confirmed by that of the apostle, 1 John ii. 1, 2: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The world here, say some, is the world of believers: for this commentary we have nothing but their own assertion, and so while it manifestly destroys the text, may be justly rejected. The apostle in this very place contra-distinguisheth the world from the saints thus; "And not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world:" What means the apostle by

Digitized by Google

ours here? Is not that the sins of believers? Was not he one of those believers? And was not this an universal epistle, written to all the saints that then were? Seeing then that the apostle John tells us plainly, That Christ not only died for him, and for the saints and members of the church of God, to whom he wrote, but for the whole world, let us then hold it for a certain and undoubted truth.

This might also be proved from many more scripture testimonies, if it were at this season needful. All the fathers, so called, and doctors of the church, for the first four centuries, preached this doctrine; according to which they boldly held forth the gospel of Christ, and efficacy of his death; inviting and entreating the heathen to come and be partakers of the benefits of it, showing them how there was a door opened for them all to be saved through Jesus Christ; not telling them that God had predestinated any of them to damnation, or had made salvation impossible to them, by withholding power and grace, necessary to believe, from them.

SEEING then that this doctrine of the universality of Christ's death is so certain and agreeable to the scripture testimony, and to the sense of the purest antiquity, it may be wondered how so many, some whereof have been esteemed not only learned, but also pious, have been capable to fall into so gross and strange an error. But the cause of this doth evidently appear, in that the way and method by which the virtue and efficacy of his death is communicated to all men, hath not been rightly understood, or indeed hath been erroneously taught. Because none of those

Digitized by Google

who have asserted this universal redemption since the reformation have given a clear, distinct, and satisfactory testimony how it is communicated to all, and so have fallen short of fully declaring the perfection of the gospel dispensation, others have been thereby the more strengthened in their errors.

As DARKNESS, and the great apostasy, came not upon the Christian world all at once, but by several degrees, one thing making way for another; until that thick and gross vail came to be overspread, wherewith the nations were so blindly covered, from the seventh and eighth, until the sixteenth century; even as the darkness of the night comes not upon the outward creation at once, but by degrees, according as the sun declines in each horizon; so neither did that full and clear light and knowledge of the glorious dispensation of the gospel of Christ reappear all at once; the work of the first witnesses being more to testify against and discover the abuses of the apostasy, than to establish the truth in purity. He that comes to build a new city, must first remove the old rubbish before he can see to lay a new foundation; and he that comes to an house greatly polluted and full of dirt, will first sweep away and remove the filth, before he put up his own good and new furniture. The dawning of the day dispels the darkness, and makes us see the things that are most conspicuous: but the distinct discovering and discerning of things, so as to make a certain and perfect observation, is reserved for the arising of the sun and its shining in full brightness. And we can, from a certain experience, boldly affirm, that the not wait-

Digitized by Google

ing for this, but building among, yea, and with, the old Popish rubbish, and setting up before a full purgation, hath been to most Protestants the foundation of many a mistake, and an occasion of unspeakable hurt.

Therefore the Lord God, who as he seeth meet doth communicate and make known to man the more full, evident, and perfect knowledge of his everlasting truth, hath been pleased to reserve the more full discovery of this glorious and evangelical dispensation to this our age; albeit divers testimonies have thereunto been borne by some noted men in several ages. And for the greater augmentation of the glory of his grace, that no man might have whereof to boast, he hath raised up a few despicable and illiterate men, and for the most part mechanics, to be the dispensers of it; by which gospel all the scruples, doubts, hesitations, and objections above mentioned are easily and evidently answered, and the justice as well as mercy of God, according to their divine and heavenly harmony, are exhibited, established, and confirmed.

According to which certain light and gospel, as the knowledge thereof has been manifested to us by the revelation of Jesus Christ in us, fortified by our own sensible experience, and sealed by the testimony of the Spirit in our hearts, we can confidently affirm, and clearly evince, according to the testimony of the holy scriptures, the following points:

First, That God, who out of his infinite love sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world, who tasted death for every man, hath given to every man, whether

Digitized by Google

Jew or Gentile, Turk or Scythian, Indian or Barbarian, of whatsoever nation, country, or place, a certain day or time of visitation; during which day or time it is possible for them to be saved, and to partake of the fruit of Christ's death.

Secondly, That for this end God hath communicated and given unto every man a measure of the light of his own Son, a measure of grace, or a measure of the Spirit, which the scripture expresses by several names, as sometimes of the seed of the kingdom, Mat. xiii. 18, 19; the Light that makes all things manifest, Eph. v. 13; the Word of God, Rom. x. 17; or manifestation of the Spirit given to profit withal, 1 Cor. xii. 7; a talent, Mat. xxv. 15; a little leaven, Mat. xiii. 33; the gospel preached in every creature, Col. i. 23.

Thirdly, That God, in and by this Light and Seed, invites, calls, exhorts, and strives with every man, in order to save him; which, as it is received and not resisted, works the salvation of all, even of those who are ignorant of the death and sufferings of Christ, and of Adam's fall, both by bringing them to a sense of their own misery, and to be sharers in the sufferings of Christ inwardly, and by making them partakers of his resurrection, in becoming holy, pure, and righteous, and recovered out of their sins. By which also are saved they that have the knowledge of Christ outwardly, in that it opens their understanding rightly to use and apply the things delivered in the scriptures, and to receive the saving use of them: but that this may be resisted and rejected in both, in which then God is

Digitized by Google

said to be resisted and pressed down, and Christ to be again crucified, and put to open shame in and among men. And to those who thus resist and refuse him, he becomes their condemnation.

According to this doctrine the mercy of God is excellently well exhibited, in that none are necessarily shut out from salvation; and it exalts above all the grace of God, to which it attributeth all good, even the least and smallest actions that are so; ascribing thereunto not only the first beginnings and motions of good, but also the whole conversion and salvation of the soul.

By this day and time of visitation, which we say God gives unto all, during which they may be saved, we do not understand the whole time of every man's life; though to some it may be extended even to the very hour of death, as we see in the example of the thief converted upon the cross; but such a season at least as sufficiently exonerateth God of every man's condemnation, which to some may be sooner, and to others later, according as the Lord in his wisdom sees meet. So that many men may outlive this day, after which there may be no possibility of salvation to them, and God justly suffers them to be hardened, as a just punishment of their unbelief, and even raises them up as instruments of wrath, and makes them a scourge one against another. Whence to men in this condition may be fitly applied those scriptures which are abused to prove that God incites men necessarily to sin. This is notably expressed by the apostle, Rom. i., from verse 17 to the end, but especially verse 28, "And even as they did not like to

Digitized by Google

retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." That many may outlive this day of God's gracious visitation unto them, is shown by the example of Esau, Heb. xii. 16, 17, who sold his birthright; so he had it once, and was capable to have kept it; but afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected. This appears also by Christ's weeping over Jerusalem, Luke xix. 42, saying, "If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." Which plainly imports a time when they might have known them, which now was removed from them, though they were yet alive.

By this seed, grace, and word of God, and light wherewith we say every one is enlightened, and hath a measure of it, which strives with him in order to save him, and which may, by the stubbornness and wickedness of man's will, be quenched, bruised, wounded, pressed down, slain and crucified, we understand not the proper essence and nature of God precisely taken, which is not divisible into parts and measures, as being a most pure, simple being, void of all composition or division, and therefore can neither be resisted, hurt, wounded, crucified, nor slain by all the efforts and strength of men; but we understand a spiritual, heavenly, and invisible principle, in which God, as Father, Son and Spirit, dwells; a measure of which divine and glorious life is in all men as a seed, which of its own nature, draws, invites, and inclines to God. And as every unrighteous action is witnessed against and reproved by this

Digitized by Google

light and seed, so by such actions it is hurt, wounded, and slain, and flees from them even as the flesh of man flees from that which is of a contrary nature to it. Now because it is never separated from God nor Christ, but wherever it is, God and Christ are as wrapped up therein, therefore and in that respect as it is resisted, God is said to be resisted; and where it is borne down, God is said to be pressed as a cart under sheaves, and Christ is said to be slain and crucified. And on the contrary, as this seed is received in the heart, and suffered to bring forth its natural and proper effect, Christ comes to be formed and raised, of which the scripture makes so much mention, calling it the new man; Christ within, the hope of glory. This is that Christ within, which we are heard so much to speak and declare of; every where preaching him up, and exhorting people to believe in the light, and obey it, that they may come to know Christ in them, to deliver them from all sin.

But by this, as we do not at all intend to equal ourselves to that holy man the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, so neither do we destroy the reality of his present existence, as some have falsely calumniated us. For though we affirm that Christ dwells in us, yet not immediately, but mediately, as he is in that seed, which is in us; whereas he, to wit, the Eternal Word, which was with God, and was God, dwelt immediately in that holy man. He then is as the head, and we as the members; he the vine, and we the branches.

WE UNDERSTAND this seed, light, or grace to be a real

Digitized by Google

spiritual substance, which the soul of man is capable to feel and apprehend; from which that real, spiritual, inward birth in believers arises called the new creature, the new man in the heart. This seems strange to carnal-minded men, because they are not acquainted with it; but we know it, and are sensible of it, by a true and certain experience. Though it be hard for man in his natural wisdom to comprehend it, until he come to feel it in himself; and if he should, holding it in the mere notion, it would avail him little; yet we are able to make it appear to be true, and that our faith concerning it is not without a solid ground: for it is in and by this inward and substantial seed in our hearts as it comes to receive nourishment, and to have a birth in us, that we come to have those spiritual senses raised by which we are made capable of tasting and seeing the things of God: for a man cannot reach unto those things by his natural spirit and senses.

We do not hereby intend any ways to lessen or derogate from the atonement and sacrifice of Jesus Christ; but on the contrary do magnify and exalt it. For as we believe all those things to have been certainly transacted which are recorded in the holy scriptures concerning the birth, life, miracles, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; so we do also believe that it is the duty of every one to believe it to whom it pleases God to reveal the same, and to bring to them the knowledge of it; yea we believe it were damnable unbelief not to believe it when so declared, and to resist that holy seed, which as minded would lead and incline every one to believe it as it is offered unto them.

Digitized by Google

As we firmly believe it was necessary that Christ should come, that by his death and sufferings he might offer up himself a sacrifice to God for our sins, who his own self "bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" so we believe that the remission of sins which any partake of, is only in and by virtue of that most satisfactory sacrifice, and no otherwise. For it is by the obedience of that one that the free gift is come upon all to justification. For we affirm, that as all men partake of the fruit of Adam's fall, in that by reason of that evil seed which through him is communicated unto them, they are prone and inclined unto evil, though thousands of thousands be ignorant of Adam's fall, neither ever knew of the eating of the forbidden fruit; so also many may come to feel the influence of this holy and divine seed and light, and be turned from evil to good by it, though they knew nothing of Christ's coming in the flesh, through whose obedience and sufferings it is purchased unto them. And as we affirm it is absolutely needful that those do believe the history of Christ's outward appearance, whom it pleased God to bring to the knowledge of it; so we do freely confess, that even that outward knowledge is very comfortable to such as are subject to and led by the inward seed and light. For not only doth the sense of Christ's love and sufferings tend to humble them, but they are thereby also strengthened in their faith, and encouraged to follow that excellent pattern which he hath left us, "who suffered for us," as saith the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 21, "leaving us an example that we should follow his steps:" and many times we are greatly edified and re-

Digitized by Google

freshed with the gracious sayings which proceed out of his mouth. The history then is profitable and comfortable with the mystery, and never without it; but the mystery is and may be profitable without the explicit and outward knowledge of the history.

THIS BRINGS us to another question, to wit, Whether Christ be in all men or no? Which sometimes hath been asked us, and arguments brought against it; because indeed it is to be found in some of our writings that Christ is in all men; and we often are heard, in our public meetings and declarations, to desire every man to know and be acquainted with Christ in them, telling them that Christ is in them; it is fit, therefore, for removing of all mistakes, to say something in this place concerning this matter. We have said before how that a divine, spiritual, and supernatural light is in all men; how that God and Christ dwelleth in it, and is never separated from it; also how that, as it is received and closed with in the heart, Christ comes to be formed and brought forth: but we are far from ever having said, that Christ is thus formed in all men, or in the wicked: for that is a great attainment, which the apostle travailed that it might be brought forth in the Galatians. Neither is Christ in all men by way of union, or indeed, to speak strictly, by way of inhabitation; because this inhabitation, as it is generally taken, imports union, or the manner of Christ's being in the saints: as it is written, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them," 2 Cor. vi. 16. But in regard Christ is in all men as in a seed, yea, and that he never is nor can be separate from that holy pure seed and light

Digitized by Google

which is in all men; therefore may it be said in a larger sense, that he is in all, even as we observed before. The scripture saith, Amos ii. 13, God is pressed down as a cart under sheaves; and Heb. vi. 6, Christ is crucified in the ungodly; though to speak properly and strictly, neither can God be pressed down, nor Christ, as God, be crucified.

In this respect then, as he is in the seed which is in all men, we have said Christ is in all men, and have preached and directed all men to Christ in them, who lies crucified in them by their sins and iniquities, that they may look upon him whom they have pierced, and repent: whereby he that now lies as it were slain and buried in them, may come to be raised, and have dominion in their hearts over all. And thus also the apostle Paul preached to the Corinthians and Galatians, Christ crucified in them, ἐν ὑμῖν as the Greek hath it, 1 Cor. ii. 2; Gal. iii. 1. This Jesus Christ was that which the apostle desired to know in them, and make known unto them, that they might come to be sensible how they had thus been crucifying Christ, that so they might repent and be saved. And forasmuch as Christ is called that light that enlightens every man, the light of the world, therefore the light is taken for Christ, who truly is the fountain of light, and hath his habitation in it for ever. Thus the light of Christ is sometimes called Christ, *i. e.* that in which Christ is, and from which he is never separated.

It will manifestly appear by what is above said, that we understand not this divine principle to be any part of man's nature, nor yet to be any relics of any good which

Digitized by Google

Adam lost by his fall, in that we make it a distinct separate thing from man's soul, and all the faculties of it: yet such is the malice of our adversaries, that they cease not sometimes to calumniate us, as if we preached up a natural light, or the light of man's natural conscience. We certainly know that this light of which we speak is not only distinct, but of a different nature from the soul of man, and its faculties. Indeed that man, as he is a rational creature, hath reason as a natural faculty of his soul, by which he can discern things that are rational, we deny not; for this is a property natural and essential to him, by which he can know and learn many arts and sciences, beyond what any other animal can do by the mere animal principle. Neither do we deny but by this rational principle man may apprehend in his brain a knowledge of God and spiritual things; yet that not being the right organ, it cannot profit him towards salvation, but rather hindereth.

Indeed the great cause of the apostasy hath been, that man hath sought to fathom the things of God in and by this natural and rational principle, and to build up a religion in it, neglecting and overlooking this principle and seed of God in the heart; so that herein, in the most universal and catholic sense, hath Anti-Christ in every man set up himself, and sitteth in the temple of God as God, and above every thing that is called God. For men being the temple of the Holy Ghost, as saith the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 16, when the rational principle sets up itself there above the seed of God, to reign and rule as a prince in spiritual things, while the holy seed is wounded and bruised, there

Digitized by Google

is Anti-Christ in every man, or somewhat exalted above and against Christ.

Nevertheless we do not hereby affirm as if man had received his reason to no purpose, or to be of no service unto him, in no wise; we look upon reason as fit to order and rule man in things natural. For as God gave two great lights to rule the outward world, the sun and moon, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; so hath he given man the light of his Son, a spiritual divine light, to rule him in things spiritual, and the light of reason to rule him in things natural. And even as the moon borrows her light from the sun, so ought men, if they would be rightly and comfortably ordered in natural things, to have their reason enlightened by this divine and pure light. Which enlightened reason, in those that obey and follow this true light, we confess may be useful to man even in spiritual things, as it is still subservient and subject to the other; even as the animal life in man, regulated and ordered by his reason, helps him in going about things that are rational.

WE DO FURTHER rightly distinguish this from man's natural conscience; for conscience being that in man which ariseth from the natural faculties of man's soul, may be defiled and corrupted. It is said expressly of the impure, Tit. i. 15, "That even their mind and conscience is defiled;" but this light can never be corrupted nor defiled; neither did it ever consent to evil or wickedness in any: for it is said expressly, that it makes all things manifest that are reprovable, Eph. v. 13, and so is a faithful witness for God

Digitized by Google

against every unrighteousness in man. Now conscience, to define it truly, comes from *conscire*, and is that knowledge which ariseth in man's heart from what agreeth, contradicteth, or is contrary to any thing believed by him, whereby he becomes conscious to himself that he transgresseth by doing that which he is persuaded he ought not to do. So that the mind being once blinded or defiled with a wrong belief, there ariseth a conscience from that belief, which troubles him when he goes against it. As for example: A Turk who hath possessed himself with a false belief that it is unlawful for him to drink wine, if he do it, his conscience smites him for it; but though he keep many wives, his conscience troubles him not, because his judgment is already defiled with a false opinion that it is lawful for him to do the one, and unlawful to do the other.

So if a Papist eat flesh in Lent, or be not diligent enough in adoration of saints and images, or if he should contemn images, his conscience would smite him for it, because his judgment is already blinded with a false belief concerning these things: whereas the light of Christ never consented to any of those abominations. Thus then man's natural conscience is sufficiently distinguished from it; for conscience followeth the judgment, doth not inform it; but this light, as it is received, removes the blindness of the judgment, opens the understanding, and rectifies both the judgment and conscience. So we confess also, that conscience is an excellent thing, where it is rightly informed and enlightened; wherefore some of us have fitly compared it to the lanthorn, and the light of Christ to a candle: a

Digitized by Google

lanthorn is useful, when a clear candle burns and shines in it; but otherwise of no use. To the light of Christ then in the conscience, and not to man's natural conscience, it is that we continually commend men; this, not that, is it which we preach up, and direct people to, as to a most certain guide unto life eternal.

THIS LIGHT, seed, and grace, appears to be no power or natural faculty of man's mind; because a man that is in his health can, when he pleases, stir up, move, and exercise the faculties of his soul; he is absolute master of them; and except there be some natural cause or impediment in the way, he can use them at his pleasure: but this light and seed of God in man he cannot move and stir up when he pleaseth; but it moves, blows, and strives with man, as the Lord seeth meet. For though there be a possibility of salvation to every man during the day of his visitation, yet cannot a man, at any time when he pleaseth, or hath some sense of his misery, stir up that light and grace, so as to procure to himself tenderness of heart; but he must wait for it: which comes upon all at certain times and seasons, wherein it works powerfully upon the soul, mightily tenders it, and breaks it; at which time, if man resist it not, but closes with it, he comes to know salvation by it.

God moves in love to mankind, in this seed in his heart, at some singular times, setting his sins in order before him, and seriously inviting him to repentance, offering to him remission of sins and salvation; which if man accept of, he may be saved. Now there is no man alive, and I am

Digitized by Google

confident there shall be none to whom this paper shall come, who, if they will deal faithfully and honestly with their own hearts, will not be forced to acknowledge that they have been sensible of this in some measure, less or more; which is a thing that man cannot bring upon himself with all his pains and industry. This then, oh man and woman! is the day of God's gracious visitation to thy soul, which if thou resist not, thou shalt be happy forever. This is the day of the Lord, which, as Christ saith, is like the lightning, which shineth from the east unto the west; and the wind or spirit, which blows upon the heart, and no man knows whither it goes, nor whence it comes.

Mat. xxiv. 27. John iii. 8.

THIS LEADS me to speak concerning the manner of this seed or light's operation in the hearts of all men, which will show yet more manifestly, how widely we differ from all those that exalt a natural power or light in man; and how our principle leads above all others to attribute our whole salvation to the mere power, spirit, and grace of God.

To them then that ask us after this manner, How do ye differ from the Pelagians and Arminians? For if two men have equal sufficient light and grace, and the one be saved by it, and the other not; is it not because the one improves it, the other not? Is not then the will of man the cause of the one's salvation beyond the other? I say, to such we thus answer: That as the grace and light in all is sufficient to save all, and of its own nature would save all, so it strives and wrestles with all in order to save them; he

Digitized by Google

that resists its striving, is the cause of his own condemnation; he that resists it not, it becomes his salvation: so that in him that is saved, the working is of the grace, and not of the man; and it is a passiveness rather than an act; though afterwards, as man is wrought upon, there is a will raised in him, by which he comes to be a co-worker with the grace: for according to that of Augustine, "He that made us without us, will not save us without us." So that the first step is not by man's working, but by his not contrary working.

We believe, that at these singular seasons of every man's visitation above-mentioned, as man is wholly unable of himself to work with the grace, neither can he move one step out of the natural condition, until the grace lay hold upon him; so it is possible for him to be passive, and not to resist it, as it is possible for him to resist it. So we say, the grace of God works in and upon man's nature; which, though of itself wholly corrupted and defiled, and prone to evil, yet is capable to be wrought upon by the grace of God; even as iron, though a hard and cold metal of itself, may be warmed and softened by the heat of the fire, and wax melted by the sun. And as iron or wax, when removed from the fire or sun, returneth to its former condition of coldness and hardness; so man's heart, as it resists or retires from the grace of God, returns to its former condition again. I have often had the manner of God's working, in order to salvation towards all men, illustrated to my mind by one or two clear examples, which I shall here add for the information of others.

Digitized by Google

The first is, Of a man heavily diseased; to whom I compare man in his fallen and natural condition. I suppose God, who is the great physician, not only to give this man physic, after he hath used all the industry he can for his own health, by any skill or knowledge of his own, but He, even the Lord, his great physician, cometh and poureth the remedy into his mouth, and as it were layeth him in his bed; so that if the sick man be but passive, it will necessarily work the effect: but if he be stubborn and untoward, and will needs rise up and go forth into the cold, or eat such fruits as are hurtful to him, while the medicine should operate; then, though of its nature it tendeth to cure him, yet it will prove destructive to him, because of those obstructions which it meeteth with. Now as the man that should thus undo himself would certainly be the cause of his own death; so who will say, that, if cured, he owes not his health wholly to the physician, and not to any deed of his own; seeing his part was not any action, but a passiveness?

The second example is, Of divers men lying in a dark pit together, where all their senses are so stupefied, that they are scarce sensible of their own misery. To this I compare man in his natural, corrupt, fallen condition. I suppose not that any of these men, wrestling to deliver themselves, do thereby stir up or engage one able to deliver them to give them his help, saying within himself, I see one of these men willing to be delivered, and doing what in him lies, therefore he deserves to be assisted; as say the Socinians, Pelagians, and Semi-Pelagians. Neither do I sup-

Digitized by Google

pose that this deliverer comes to the top of the pit, and puts down a ladder, desiring them that will to come up; and so puts them upon using their own strength and will to come up; as do the Jesuits and Arminians. But I suppose that the deliverer comes at certain times, and fully discovers and informs them of the great misery and hazard they are in, if they continue in that noisome and pestiferous place; yea, forces them to a certain sense of their misery (for the wickedest men at times are made sensible of their misery by God's visitation), and not only so, but lays hold upon them, and gives them a pull, in order to lift them out of their misery; which if they resist not will save them; only they may resist it. This being applied as the former, doth the same way illustrate the matter.

Thus both the mercy and justice of God are established, and the will and strength of man are brought down and rejected; his condemnation is made to be of himself, and his salvation to depend upon God only.

HAVING thus opened our mind and judgment in this matter, the first thing to be proved is, That God hath given to every man a day or time of visitation, wherein it is possible for him to be saved. If we can prove that there is a day and time given, in which those might have been saved that actually perish, the matter is done: for none deny but those that are saved have a day of visitation. This then appears by the regrets and complaints which the Spirit of God throughout the whole scriptures makes, even to those that did perish; sharply reproving them, for that they did not accept of, nor close with God's visitation

Digitized by Google

and offer of mercy to them. Thus the Lord expresses himself then first of all to Cain, Gen. iv. 6, 7, "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? If thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door." This was said to Cain before he slew his brother Abel, when the evil seed began to tempt him, and work in his heart; we see how God gave warning to Cain in season, and in the day of his visitation towards him, acceptance and remission if he did well. Neither could God have proposed the doing of good as a condition, if he had not given Cain sufficient strength, whereby he was capable to do good.

The Lord himself also shows that he gave a day of visitation to the old world, Gen. vi. 3, "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive in man;" for so it ought to be translated. This manifestly implies, that his Spirit did strive with man, and doth strive with him for a season; which season expiring, God ceaseth to strive with him, in order to save him: for the Spirit of God cannot be said to strive with man after the day of his visitation is expired; seeing it naturally, and without any resistance, works its effect then, to wit, continually to judge and condemn him. From this day of visitation, that God hath given to every one, is it that he is said to "wait to be gracious," Isa. xxx. 18, and to be "long-suffering." That place of the apostle Paul doth much contribute also to clear the matter, Rom. ii. 4, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that

Digitized by Google

the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Pau speaketh here to the unregenerate, and to the wicked, who, in the following verse he saith, "Treasure up wrath unto the day of wrath;" and to such he commends the riches of the forbearance and long-suffering of God; showing that the tendency of God's goodness leadeth to repentance. How could it necessarily tend to lead them to repentance, how could it be called riches or goodness to them, if there were not a time wherein they might repent by it, and come to be sharers of the riches exhibited in it?

If God plead with the wicked, from the possibility of their being accepted; if God's Spirit strive in them for a season, in order to save them who afterwards perish; if he wait to be gracious unto them; if he be long-suffering towards them; and if this long-suffering be salvation to them while it endureth, during which time God willeth them not to perish, but exhibiteth to them the riches of his goodness and forbearance to lead them to repentance; then there is a day of visitation wherein such might have been, or some such now may be saved, who have perished, and may perish, if they repent not.

This appeareth from the prophet Isaiah, v. 4, "What could I have done more to my vineyard?" For in verse 2, he saith: He had fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine; and yet, saith he, "when I looked it should have brought forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes." Wherefore he calleth the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, to judge betwixt him and his vineyard, saying; "What could

Digitized by Google

I have done more to my vineyard, than I have done in it? and yet," as is said, "it brought forth wild grapes:" which was applied to many in Israel who refused God's mercy. The same example is used by Christ, Matt. xxi. 33; Mark xii. 1; Luke xx. 9, where Jesus shows, how to some a vineyard was planted, and all things given necessary for them, to get them fruit to pay or restore to their master; and how the master many times waited to be merciful to them, in sending servants after servants, and passing by many offences, before he determined to destroy and cast them out. This cannot be understood of the saints, or of such as repent and are saved; for it is said expressly, "He will destroy them." Neither would the parable any ways have answered the end for which it is alleged, if these men had not been in a capacity to have done good; yea, such was their capacity, that Christ saith in the prophet, "What could I have done more?" So that it is more than manifest, that by this parable, repeated in three sundry evangelists, Christ holds forth his long-suffering towards men, and their wickedness to whom means of salvation being afforded, do nevertheless resist, to their own condemnation.

That there is a day of visitation given to the wicked, wherein they might have been saved, and which being expired, they are shut out from salvation, appears evidently by Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem, expressed in three sundry places, Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34; and xix. 41, 42; "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, even thou,

Digitized by Google

at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes!" First, he insinuates that there was a day wherein the inhabitants of Jerusalem might have known those things that belonged to their peace. Secondly, That during that day he was willing to have gathered them, even as an "hen gathereth her chickens."

So, it is after real offers of mercy and salvation rejected, that men's hearts are hardened, and not before. Thus that saying is verified, "To him that hath, shall be given; and from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."

THAT WHICH comes in the second place to be proved is, That whereby God offers to work this salvation during the day of every man's visitation; and that is, That he hath given to every man a measure of saving, sufficient, and supernatural light and grace. This I shall do, by God's assistance, by some plain and clear testimonies of the scripture.

First, From that of John i. 9: "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This place doth so clearly favor us, that by some it is called the Quaker's text; for it doth evidently demonstrate our assertion; so that it scarce needs either consequence or deduction, seeing itself is a consequence of two propositions asserted in the former verses, from which it followeth as a conclusion in the very terms of our faith. The first of these propositions is, "The life that is in him is the light of men:" the second, "The light shineth in the darkness:" and from

Digitized by Google

these two he infers, and "He is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

So that it is plain there comes no man into the world, whom Christ hath not enlightened in some measure, and in whose dark heart this light doth not shine; though the "darkness comprehend it not," yet it shineth there; and the nature thereof is to dispel the darkness, where men shut not their eyes upon it.

That this saving light and seed, or a measure of it, is given to all, Christ tells us expressly in the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii. from ver. 18; Mark iv., and Luke viii. 11, he saith, That this seed sown in those several sorts of grounds is the word of the kingdom, which the apostle calls the word of faith, Rom. x. 8, James i. 21, the "implanted ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul;" the words themselves declare that it is that which is saving in the nature of it, for in the good ground it fructified abundantly.

Let us then observe, that this seed of the kingdom, this saving, supernatural, and sufficient word, was really sown in the stony thorny ground, and by the wayside, where it did not profit, but became useless as to these grounds: it was, I say, the same seed that was sown in the good ground. It is then the fear of persecution and deceitfulness of riches, as Christ himself interpreteth the parable, which hindereth this seed to grow in the hearts of many: not but that in its own nature it is sufficient, being the same with that which groweth up and prospereth in the hearts of those who receive it. So that though all are not saved

Digitized by Google

by it, yet there is a seed of salvation planted and sown in the hearts of all by God, which would grow up and redeem the soul, if it were not choked and hindered.

And to this answered the parable of the talents, Matt. xxv.; he that had two talents was accepted, as well as he that had five, because he used them to his master's profit: and he that had one might have done so; his talent was of the same nature of the rest; it was as capable to have proportionably brought forth its interest as the rest. And so though there be not a like proportion of grace given to all, to some five talents, to some two talents, and to some but one talent; yet there is given to all that which is sufficient, and no more is required than according to that which is given: "For unto whomsoever much is given, from him shall much be required," Luke xii. 48.

THIS SAVING spiritual light is the gospel, which the apostle saith expressly is preached "in every creature under heaven;" even that very "gospel whereof Paul was made a minister," Col. i. 23. For the gospel is not a mere declaration of good things, being the "power of God unto salvation to all those that believe," Rom i. 16. Though the outward declaration of the gospel be taken sometimes for the gospel; yet it is but figuratively. For to speak properly, the gospel is this inward power and life which preacheth glad tidings in the hearts of all men, offering salvation unto them, and seeking to redeem them from their iniquities, and therefore it is said to be preached "in every creature under heaven:" whereas there are many thousands of men and women to whom the outward gospel was never preached.

Digitized by Google

Therefore the Apostle Paul, Romans i., where he saith, "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation," adds, that, "therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith;" and also the "wrath of God against such as hold the truth of God in unrighteousness:" for this reason, saith he, "because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them." Now that which may be known of God, is known by the gospel, which was manifest in them. For those of whom the apostle speaks had no outward gospel preached unto them; so that it was by the inward manifestation of the knowledge of God in them, which is indeed the gospel preached in man, "that the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;" that is, it reveals to the soul that which is just, good, and righteous; and that as the soul receiveth it and believes, righteousness comes more and more to be revealed from one degree of faith to another.

For though, as the following verse saith, the outward creation declares the power of God; yet that which may be known of him is manifest within: by which inward manifestation we are made capable to see and discern the Eternal Power and Godhead in the outward creation; so were it not for this inward principle, we could no more understand the invisible things of God by the outward visible creation, than a blind man can see and discern the variety of shapes and colors, or judge of the beauty of the outward creation. Therefore he saith, first, "That which may be known of God is manifest in them," and in and by that they may read and understand the power and Godhead

Digitized by Google

in those things that are outward and visible. And though any might pretend that the outward creation doth of itself, without any supernatural or saving principle in the heart, even declare to the natural man that there is a God; yet what would such a knowledge avail, if it did not also communicate to me what the will of God is, and how I shall do that which is acceptable to him? For the outward creation, though it may beget a persuasion that there is some eternal power or virtue by which the world hath had its beginning; yet it doth not tell me, nor doth it inform me of that which is just, holy, and righteous; how I shall be delivered from my temptations and evil affections, and come unto righteousness; that must be from some inward manifestation in my heart.

Whereas those Gentiles of whom the apostle speaks knew by that inward law and manifestation of the knowledge of God in them to distinguish betwixt good and evil, as in the next chapter appears. The prophet Micah, speaking of man in general, declares this, Mic. vi. 8, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God?" He doth not say God requires, till he hath first assured that he hath showed unto them. Now because this is showed unto all men, and manifest in them, therefore, saith the apostle, is the "wrath of God revealed against them, for that they hold the truth in unrighteousness;" that is, the measure of truth, the light, the seed, the grace in them: for that they hide the talent in the earth, that is, in the earthly and unrighteous part

Digitized by Google

in their hearts, and suffer it not to bring forth fruit, but to be choked with the sensual cares of this life, the fear of reproach, and the deceitfulness of riches, as by the parables above mentioned doth appear.

But the apostle Paul opens and illustrates this matter yet more, Rom. x., where he declares, "That the word which he preached" (now the word which he preached, and the gospel which he preached, and whereof he was a minister, is one and the same) "is not far off, but nigh in the heart and in the mouth;" which done, he frameth as it were the objection of our adversaries in the 14th and 15th verses, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" This he answers in the 18th verse, saying, "But, I say, have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world;" insinuating that this divine preacher hath sounded in the ears and hearts of all men: for of the outward apostles that saying was not true, neither then, nor many hundred years after; yea, for aught we know, there may be yet great and spacious nations and kingdoms that never have heard of Christ nor his apostles as outwardly. This inward and powerful word of God is yet more fully described in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. iv. 12, 13: "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

This is that faithful witness and messenger of God that

Digitized by Google

bears witness for God, and for his righteousness in the hearts of all men: for he hath not left man without a witness, Acts xiv. 17, and he is said to be "given for a witness to the people," Isa. lv. 4. And as this word beareth witness for God, so it is not placed in men only to condemn them: for as he is given for a "witness," so saith the prophet, he is given for a leader and commander. The light is given, that all through it may believe, John i. 7, "for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," which is placed in man's heart, both to be a witness for God, and to be a means to bring man to God through faith and repentance: it is therefore powerful, that it may divide betwixt the soul and the spirit: it is like a two-edged sword, that it may cut off iniquity from him, and separate betwixt the precious and the vile; and because man's heart is cold and hard like iron naturally, therefore hath God placed this word in him, which is said to be like a fire, and like a hammer, Jer. xxiii. 29, that like as by the heat of the fire the iron, of its own nature cold, is warmed, and softened, and by the strength of the hammer is framed according to the mind of the worker; so the cold and hard heart of man is by the virtue and powerfulness of this word of God near and in the heart, as it resists not, warmed and softened, and receiveth a heavenly and celestial impression and image.

THE THIRD proposition which ought to be proved is, That it is by this light, seed, or grace that God works the salvation of all men, and many come to partake of the benefit of Christ's death, and salvation purchased by him. By the inward and effectual operations of which, as many

Digitized by Google

heathen have come to be partakers of the promises who were not of the seed of Abraham after the flesh, so may some now, to whom God hath rendered the knowledge of the history impossible, come to be saved by Christ. Having already proved that Christ hath died for all, that there is a day of visitation given to all, during which salvation is possible to them, and that God hath actually given a measure of saving grace and light unto all, preached the gospel to and in them, and placed the word of faith in their hearts, the matter of this proposition may seem to be proved. Yet shall I a little, for the farther satisfaction of all who desire to know the truth, and hold it as it is in Jesus, prove this from two or three clear scripture testimonies.

Our theme then hath two parts: First, That those that have the gospel and Christ outwardly preached unto them, are not saved but by the working of the grace and light in their hearts.

Secondly, That by the working and operation of this, many have been, and some may be, saved, to whom the gospel hath never been outwardly preached, and who are utterly ignorant of the outward history of Christ.

As to the first, I shall prove it in few words. And first from the words of Christ to Nicodemus, John iii. 3, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Now this birth cometh not by the outward preaching of the gospel, or knowledge of Christ, or historical faith in him; seeing many have that, and firmly believe it, who are never thus renewed. The apostle Paul also goes so far, while he commends the ne-

Digitized by Google

cessity and excellency of this new creation, as in a certain respect to lay aside the outward knowledge of Christ, or the knowledge of him after the flesh, in these words, 2 Cor. v. 16, 17, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

Such as come to know this new birth, to be in Christ indeed, to be a new creature, to have "old things passed away, and all things become new," may safely say with the apostle, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." Now this new creature proceeds from the work of this light and grace in the heart: it is that word which we speak of that is sharp and piercing, that implanted word, able to save the soul, by which this birth is begotten; and therefore Christ has purchased unto us this holy seed, that thereby this birth might be brought forth in us, which is therefore also called "the manifestation of the Spirit, given to every man to profit withal;" for it is written, that "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." And the apostle Peter also ascribeth this birth to the seed and word of God, which we have so much declared of, saying, 1 Pet. i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

Though, then, this seed be small in its appearance, so that Christ compares it to a "grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds," Matt. xiii. 31, 32, and that it be hid

Digitized by Google

in the earthly part of man's heart; yet therein is life and salvation towards the sons of men wrapped up, which comes to be revealed as they give way to it. And in this seed in the hearts of all men is the kingdom of God, as in a capacity to be produced, according as it receives depth, is nourished, and not choked: hence Christ saith, that the kingdom of God was in the very Pharisees, Luke xvii. 20, 21, who did oppose and resist him, and were justly accounted as serpents, and a generation of vipers. The kingdom of Jesus Christ, yea Jesus Christ himself, Christ within, who is the hope of glory, and becometh wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, is in every man's and woman's heart, in that little incorruptible seed, ready to be brought forth, as it is cherished and received in the love of it. For there can be no men worse than those rebellious and unbelieving Pharisees were; and yet this kingdom was thus within them, and they were directed to look for it there; so it is neither lo here, nor lo there, in this or the other observation, that this is known, but as this seed of God in the heart is minded and entertained.

And certainly hence it is, even because this light, seed, and grace that appears in the heart of man is so little regarded, and so much overlooked, that so few know Christ brought forth in them. So that Christ, as he met with opposition from all kinds of professors in his outward appearance, doth now also in his inward. It was the meanness of his outward man that made many despise him, saying, "Is not this the son of the carpenter? Are not his brethren and sisters among us? Is not this a Galilean?

Digitized by Google

And came there ever a prophet out of Galilee?" and such like reasonings. For they expected an outward deliverer, who, as a prince, should deliver them with great ease from their enemies, and not such a MESSIAH as should be crucified shamefully, and as it were lead them into many sorrows, troubles, and afflictions. So the meanness of this appearance makes some overlook it, who desire rather something that they might exercise their subtilty, reason, and learning about, and use the liberty of their own wills. And others would have a Christ to save them without any trouble; to destroy all their enemies for them without them, and nothing or little within, and in the meanwhile to be at ease to live in their sins secure.

Whence, when all is well examined, the cause is plain; it is "because their deeds are evil," that with one consent they reject this light: for it checks the wisest of them all, and the learnedest of them all; in secret it reproves them; neither can all their logic silence it, nor can the securest among them stop its voice from crying, and reproving them within, for all their confidence in the outward knowledge of Christ, or of what he hath suffered outwardly for them. For, as hath been often said, "in a day it strives with all, wrestles with all;" and it is the unmortified nature, the first nature, the old Adam, yet alive in the wisest, in the learnedest, in the most zealous for the outward knowledge of Christ, that denies this, that despises it, that shuts it out, to their own condemnation. They come all under this description, "Every one that doth evil, hateth the light,

Digitized by Google

neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved," John iii. 20.

So that it may be said now, and we can say from a true and certain experience, as it was of old, Psalm cxviii. 22; Matt. xxi. 42; Mark xii. 10; Luke xx. 17; Acts iv. 11. The stone which the builders of all kinds have rejected, the same is become unto us the head of the corner. Glory to God for ever! who hath chosen us as first fruits to himself in this day, wherein he is arisen to plead with the nations; and therefore hath sent us forth to preach this everlasting gospel unto all, Christ nigh to all, the light in all, the seed sown in the hearts of all, that men may come and apply their minds to it. And we rejoice that we have been made to lay down our wisdom and learning, such of us as have had some of it, and our carnal reasoning, to learn of Jesus; and sit down at the feet of Jesus in our hearts, and hear him, who there makes all things manifest, and reproves all things by his light, Eph. v. 13.

For many are wise and learned in the notion, in the letter of the scripture, as the Pharisees were, and can speak much of Christ, and plead strongly against Infidels, Turks, and Jews, and it may be also against some heresies, who, in the meantime, are crucifying Christ in the small appearance of his seed in their hearts. Oh! better were it to be stripped and naked of all, and become a fool for Christ's sake, thus knowing him to teach thee in thy heart, so as thou mayest witness him raised there, feel the virtue of his cross there, and say with the apostle, "I glory in nothing, save in the cross of Christ, whereby I am crucified to the

Digitized by Google

world, and the world unto me." This is better than to write thousands of commentaries, and to preach many sermons. And it is thus to preach Christ and direct people to his pure light in the heart, that God hath raised us up, and for which the wise men of this world account us fools; because by the operation of this cross of Christ in our hearts, we have denied our own wisdom and wills in many things, and have forsaken the vain worships, fashions, and customs of this world.

For these divers centuries the world hath been full of a dry, fruitless, and barren knowledge of Christ, feeding upon the husk, and neglecting the kernel; following after the shadow, but strangers to the substance. Hence the devil matters not how much of that knowledge abounds, provided he can but possess the heart, and rule in the will, crucify the appearance of Christ there, and so keep the seed of the kingdom from taking root. For he has led them abroad, lo here, and lo there, and has made them wrestle in a false zeal so much one against another, contending for this outward observation, and for the other outward observation, seeking CHRIST in this and the other external thing, as in bread and wine; contending one with another how he is there, while some will have him to be present therein this way, and some the other way; and some in scriptures, in books, in societies, and pilgrimages, and merits. But some, confiding in an external barren faith, think all is well if they do but firmly believe that he died for their sins past, present, and to come; while in the meantime Christ lies crucified and slain, and is

Digitized by Google

daily resisted and gainsayed in his appearance in their hearts.

Thus, from a sense of this blindness and ignorance that is come over Christendom, it is that we are led and moved of the Lord so constantly and frequently to call all to turn to the light in them, to mind the light in them, to believe in Christ, as he is in them: and that in the name, power, and authority of the Lord, not in school-arguments and distinctions, we do charge them to lay aside their wisdom, to come down out of that proud, airy, brain-knowledge, and to stop that mouth, how eloquent soever to the worldly ear it may appear, and to be silent, and sit down as in the dust, and to mind the light of Christ in their own consciences; which, if minded, they would find as a sharp two-edged sword in their hearts, and as a fire and a hammer, that would knock against and burn up all that carnal, gathered, natural stuff, and make the stoutest of them all tremble, and become Quakers indeed; which those that come not to feel now, and kiss not the Son while the day lasteth, but harden their hearts, will feel to be a certain truth when it is too late. To conclude, as saith the apostle, all ought to examine themselves, whether they be in the faith indeed; and try their ownselves: for except Jesus Christ be in them, they are certainly reprobates, 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

THAT WHICH remains now to be proved is, That by the operation of this light and seed some have been and may yet be saved, to whom the gospel is not outwardly preached, nor the history of Christ outwardly known.

Digitized by Google

We have already shown how that Christ hath died for all men; and consequently these are enlightened by Christ, and have a measure of saving light and grace; yea, that the gospel, though not in any outward dispensation, is preached to them, and in them: so that thereby they are placed in a possibility of salvation. But to those arguments, by which it hath been proved, That all men have a measure of saving grace, I shall add one, and that very observable, not yet mentioned, viz., that excellent saying of the apostle Paul to Titus, chap. ii., ver. 11, "The grace of God, that brings salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Some allege, This *all* comprehends not every individual, but only all kinds: but is a bare negation sufficient to overturn the strength of a positive assertion? To put it beyond all question, I shall instance another saying of the same apostle, that we may use him as his own commentator, Rom. v. 18: "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." We must either affirm that this loss, which leads to condemnation, hath not come upon all; or say, that this free gift is come upon all by Christ.

From all which it naturally follows, that all men, even the heathen, may be saved: for Christ was given as a "light to enlighten the Gentiles," Isa. xlix. 6.

But if it be objected, That there is no name under heaven, by which salvation is known, but by the name JESUS: There-

Digitized by Google

fore they (not knowing this) cannot be saved: I answer, Though they know it not outwardly, yet if they know it inwardly, by feeling the virtue and power of it, the name JESUS indeed, which signifies a Saviour, to free them from sin and iniquity in their hearts, they are saved by it: I confess there is no other name to be saved by: but salvation lieth not in the literal, but in the experimental knowledge; albeit, those that have the literal knowledge are not saved by it, without this real experimental knowledge: yet those that have the real knowledge may be saved without the external. How many are injured by Adam's fall, that know nothing of there ever being such a man in the world, or of his eating the forbidden fruit? Why may they not then be saved by the gift and grace of Christ in them, making them righteous and holy, though they know not distinctly how that was purchased unto them by the death and sufferings of Jesus that was crucified at Jerusalem; especially seeing God hath made that knowledge simply impossible to them? As many men are killed by poison infused into their meat, though they neither know what the poison was, nor who infused it, so also on the other hand, how many are cured of their diseases by good remedies, who know not how the medicine is prepared, what the ingredients are, nor oftentimes who made it? The like may also hold in spiritual things.

IF THERE were such an absolute necessity for this outward knowledge, that it were even of the essentials of salvation, then none could be saved without it; whereas our opponents deny not, but readily confess, that many in-

Digitized by Google

fants and deaf persons are saved without it: so that here they break that general rule, and make salvation possible without it. And is not a man in China, or in India, as much to be excused for not knowing a thing which he never heard of, as a deaf man here, who cannot hear? For as the deaf man is not to be blamed, because God hath been pleased to suffer him to lie under this infirmity; so is the Chinese or the Indian as excusable, because God hath withheld from him the opportunity of hearing.

This manifestly appears by that saying of Peter, Acts x. 34: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." Peter was before liable to that mistake that the rest of the Jews were in; judging that all were unclean, except themselves, and that no man could be saved, except they were proselyted to their religion and circumcised. But God showed Peter otherways in a vision, and taught him to call nothing common or unclean; and therefore, seeing that God regarded the prayers of Cornelius, who was a stranger to the law and to Jesus Christ as to the outward, yet Peter saw that God had accepted him; and he is said to fear God before he had this outward knowledge: therefore Peter concludes that every one in every nation, without respect of persons, that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. So he makes the fear of God and the working of righteousness, and not an outward historical knowledge, the qualification: they then that have this, wherever they be, they are saved. Now we have already proved, that to

Digitized by Google

every man that grace is given, whereby he may live godly and righteously; and we see, that by this grace Cornelius did so and was accepted, and his prayers came up for a memorial before God, before he had this outward knowledge.

Also, Was not Job a perfect and upright man, that feared God, and eschewed evil? Who taught Job this? How knew Job Adam's fall? And from what scripture learned he that excellent knowledge he had, and that faith, by which he knew his Redeemer lived? For many make him as old as Moses. Was not this by an inward grace in the heart? Was it not that inward grace that taught Job to eschew evil, and to fear God? And was it not by the workings thereof that he became a just and upright man? How doth he reprove the wickedness of men, chap. xxiv.? and condemn them, verse 13, for rebelling against this light, for not knowing the way thereof, nor abiding in the paths thereof? It appears then Job believed that men had a light, and that because they rebelled against it, therefore they knew not its ways, and abode not in its paths; even as the Pharisees, who had the scriptures, are said to err, not knowing the scriptures.

So WE SEE that it is the inward work, and not the outward history and scripture, that gives the true knowledge; and by this inward light many of the heathen philosophers were sensible of the loss received by Adam, though they knew not the outward history: hence Plato asserted, That "man's soul was fallen into a dark cave, where it only conversed with shadows." Pythagoras saith, "Man wander-

Digitized by Google

eth in this world as a stranger, banished from the presence of God." And Plotinus compareth "man's soul, fallen from God, to a cinder, or dead coal, out of which the fire is extinguished." Many more such expressions, that might be gathered out of their writings, show that they were not without a sense of this loss. Also they had a knowledge and discovery of Jesus Christ inwardly, as a remedy in them, to deliver them from that evil seed, and the evil inclinations of their own hearts, though not under that particular denomination. Some called him a Holy Spirit, as Seneca, Epist. 41, who said, "There is a Holy Spirit in us, that treateth us as we treat him." Cicero calleth it an "innate light." Plotinus also calls him light, saying, That "as the sun cannot be known but by its own light, so God cannot be known but with his own light: and as the eye cannot see the sun but by receiving its image, so man cannot know God but by receiving his image; and that it behoveth man to come to purity of heart before he could know God;" calling him also Wisdom, a name frequently given him in scripture.

Much more of this kind might be instanced, by which it appears they knew Christ; and by his working in them were brought from unrighteousness to righteousness, and to love that power by which they felt themselves redeemed; so that, as saith the apostle, "They show the work of the law written in their hearts, and did the things contained in the law;" and therefore, as all doers of the law are, were no doubt justified, and saved thus by the power of Christ in them. And as this was the judgment of the apostle, so

Digitized by Google

was it of the primitive Christians. Hence Justin Martyr stuck not to call Socrates a Christian, saying, that "all such as lived according to the divine word in them, which was in all men, were Christians, such as Socrates and Heraclitus, and others among the Greeks."

SEEING THEN it is by this inward gift, grace, and light, that both those that have the gospel preached unto them, come to have Jesus brought forth in them, and to have the saving and sanctified use of all outward helps and advantages; and also by this same light, that all may come to be saved; and that God calls, invites, and strives with all, in a day, and saveth many, to whom he hath not seen meet to convey this outward knowledge; therefore we, having the experience of the inward and powerful work of this light in our hearts, even Jesus revealed in us, cannot cease to proclaim the day of the Lord that is arisen in it, crying out with the woman of Samaria, "Come and see one that hath told me all that ever I have done; Is not this the Christ?" That others may come and feel the same in themselves, and may know, that that little small thing that reproves them in their hearts, however they have despised and neglected it, is nothing less than the gospel preached in them; Christ, the wisdom and power of God, being in and by that seed seeking to save their souls.

This is that universal evangelical principle, in and by which this salvation of Christ is exhibited to all men, both Jew and Gentile, Scythian and Barbarian, of whatsoever country or kindred he be: and therefore God hath raised up unto himself, in this our age, faithful witnesses and

Digitized by Google

evangelists to preach again his everlasting gospel, and to direct all, as well the high professors, who boast of the law and the scriptures, and the outward knowledge of Christ, as the infidels and heathen that know not him that way, that they may all come to mind the light in them, and know Christ in them, "the just one whom they have so long killed, and made merry over, and he hath not resisted," James v. 6, and give up their sins, iniquities, false faith, professions, and outside righteousness, to be crucified by the power of his cross in them, so as they may know Christ within to be the hope of glory, and may come to walk in his light and be saved, who is that "true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION VII.

CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION.

AS many as resist not this light, but receive the same, it becomes in them a holy, pure, and spiritual birth, bringing forth holiness, righteousness, purity, and all those other blessed fruits which are acceptable to God; by which holy birth, to wit, Jesus Christ formed within us, and working his works in us, as we are sanctified, so are we justified in the sight of God, according to the apostle's words, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Therefore it is not by our works wrought in our will, nor yet by good works considered as of themselves; but by Christ, who is both the gift and the giver, and the cause producing the effects in us; who, as he hath reconciled us while we were enemies, doth also in his wisdom save us and justify us after this manner, as saith the same apostle elsewhere; "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," Tit. iii. 5.

THE DOCTRINE of justification comes well in order after the discussing of the extent of Christ's death, and of the

Digitized by Google

grace thereby communicated, some of the sharpest contests concerning this having from thence their rise. Many are the disputes among those called Christians concerning this point. The Papists say, "They obtain remission of sins, and are justified by the merits of Christ, as the same are applied unto them in the use of the sacraments of the church, and are dispensed in the performance of such and such ceremonies, pilgrimages, prayers, and performances, though there be not any inward renewing of the mind, nor knowing of Christ inwardly formed; yet they are remitted and made righteous *ex opere operato*, because of the power and authority accompanying the sacraments and the dispensers of them." The Protestants say, "That they obtain remission of sins, and stand justified in the sight of God by virtue of the merits and sufferings of Christ; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, they resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith, the act of believing, is not imputed unto them for righteousness."

So the justification of neither here is placed in any inward renewing of the mind, or by virtue of any spiritual birth, or formation of Christ in them; but only by a bare application of the death and sufferings of Christ outwardly performed for them: I except here, being unwilling to wrong any, what things have been said as to the necessity of inward holiness, either by some modern Papists, or some modern Protestants, who in so far as they have labored after a midst betwixt these two extremes have come near

Digitized by Google

to the truth; though this doctrine hath not since the apostasy, so far as ever I could observe, been so distinctly and evidently held forth according to the scripture's testimony as it hath pleased God to reveal it and preach it forth in this day, by the witnesses of his truth whom he hath raised to that end; which doctrine, though it be briefly held forth and comprehended in the thesis itself, yet I shall a little more fully explain.

We renounce all natural power and ability in ourselves, in order to bring us out of our lost and fallen condition and first nature; and confess, that as of ourselves we are able to do nothing that is good, so neither can we procure remission of sins or justification by any act of our own, so as to merit it, or draw it as a debt from God due unto us; but we acknowledge all to be of and from his love, which is the original and fundamental cause of our acceptance.

God manifested this love towards us, in the sending of his beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world, who gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a "sweet-smelling savor;" having made peace through the blood of his cross, that he might reconcile us unto himself, and by the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, and suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.

Forasmuch as all men who have come to man's estate (the man Jesus only excepted) have sinned, therefore all have need of this Saviour, to remove the wrath of God from them due to their offences; in this respect he is truly said to have borne the iniquities of us all in his body on the

Digitized by Google

tree, and therefore is the only Mediator, having qualified the wrath of God towards us; so that our former sins stand not in our way, being by virtue of his most satisfactory sacrifice removed and pardoned. Neither do we think that remission of sins is to be expected, sought, or obtained any other way, or by any works or sacrifice whatsoever. So then Christ by his death and sufferings hath reconciled us to God, even while we are enemies; that is, he offers reconciliation unto us; we are put into a capacity of being reconciled; God is willing to forgive us our iniquities, and to accept us, as is well expressed by the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath put in us the word of reconciliation." And therefore the apostle, in the next verses, entreats them in "Christ's stead to be reconciled to God;" intimating that the wrath of God being removed by the obedience of Christ Jesus, he is willing to be reconciled unto them, and ready to remit the sins that are past, if they repent.

We consider then our redemption in a twofold respect. The first is the redemption performed and accomplished by Christ for us in his crucified body without us; the other is the redemption wrought by Christ in us, which no less properly is called and accounted a redemption than the former.

By the first of these two, we that were unable of ourselves to do any good thing, but naturally joined and united to evil, and slaves to the power and spirit of darkness, are, notwithstanding all this, so far reconciled to God by the

Digitized by Google

death of his Son, while enemies, that we are put into a capacity of salvation, having the glad tidings of the gospel of peace offered unto us, and God is reconciled unto us in Christ, calls and invites us to himself.

By the second, we witness this capacity brought into act, whereby receiving and not resisting the purchase of his death, to wit, the light, spirit, and grace of Christ revealed in us, we witness and possess a real, true, and inward redemption from the power and prevalency of sin, and so come to be truly and really redeemed, justified, and made righteous, and to a sensible union and friendship with God. Thus he died "for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity;" and thus "we know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death." This last follows the first in order, and is a consequence of it, proceeding from it, as an effect from its cause: so as none could have enjoyed the last, without the first had been, such being the will of God; so also can none now partake of the first, but as he witnesseth the last.

Tit. ii. 14.
Phil. iii. 10.

We understand not by this justification by Christ, the good works even wrought by the Spirit of Christ; but we understand the formation of Christ in us, Christ born and brought forth in us, from which good works as naturally proceed as fruit from a fruitful tree. It is this inward birth in us, bringing forth righteousness and holiness in us, that doth justify us; which having removed and done away the contrary nature and spirit that did bear rule and bring condemnation, now is in dominion over all in our

Digitized by Google

hearts. Those then that come to know Christ thus formed in them, do enjoy him wholly and undivided, who is "the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS," Jer. xxiii. 6. This is to be clothed with Christ, and to have put him on, whom God therefore truly accounteth righteous and just.

Yet can we not, as some Protestants have unwarily done, exclude works from justification. For though we judge the best works performed by man, endeavoring a conformity to the outward law by his own strength, and in his own will are defiled and polluted, yet we believe that such works as naturally proceed from this spiritual birth and formation of Christ in us are pure and holy, even as the root from which they come; and therefore God accepts them, justifies us in them, and rewards us for them of his own free grace.

That the obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ is that by which the soul obtains remission of sins, and is the procuring cause of that grace, by whose inward workings Christ comes to be formed inwardly, and the soul to be made conformable unto him, and so just and justified, I prove from Rom. iii. 25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Here the apostle holds forth the extent and efficacy of Christ's death, showing that thereby, and by faith therein, remission of sins that are past is obtained, as being that wherein the forbearance of God is exercised towards mankind. So that though men for the sins they daily commit deserve eternal death; yet, by virtue of that most satisfactory sacrifice of Christ Jesus, the grace

Digitized by Google

and seed of God moves in love towards them, during the day of their visitation; yet not so as not to strike against the evil, for that must be burnt up and destroyed, but to redeem man out of the evil.

If God were perfectly reconciled with men, and did esteem them just while they are actually unjust, and do continue in their sins, so that no part of their redemption is to be wrought by him now, as to their reconciliation and justification; then the whole doctrinal part of the bible is useless, and of no profit: in vain were the apostles sent forth to preach repentance and remission of sins; and in vain do all the preachers bestow their labour, spend their breath, and give forth writings; seeing it is all but a vain and ineffectual essay to do that which is already perfectly done without them.

This also makes void the present intercession of Christ for men. What will become of that great article of faith, by which we affirm, "That he sits at the right hand of God, daily making intercession for us; and for which end the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered?" To pray for those that are already reconciled, and perfectly justified, is to no purpose: to pray for remission of sins is yet more needless, if all be remitted, past, present, and to come. Indeed there is not any solid solving of this, but by acknowledging according to the truth, That Christ by his death removed the wrath of God, so far as to obtain remission of sins for as many as receive that grace and light that he communicates unto them, and hath purchased for them by his blood; which,

Digitized by Google

as they believe in, they come to know remission of sins past, and power to save them from sin, and to wipe it away, so often as they may fall into it by unwatchfulness or weakness, if, applying themselves to this grace, they truly repent; for "to as many as receive him, he gives power to become the sons of God:" so none are sons, none are justified, none reconciled, until they thus receive him in that little seed in their hearts: And life eternal is offered to those, who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality: for if the righteous man depart from his righteousness, his righteousness shall be remembered no more. And therefore on the other part, none are longer sons of God, and justified, than they patiently continue in righteousness and well-doing. And therefore Christ lives always making intercession, during the day of every man's visitation, that they may be converted: and when men are in some measure converted, he makes intercession that they may continue and go on, and not faint, nor go back again. Much more might be said to confirm this truth; but I go on to take notice of the common objections against it.

THE FIRST and chief is drawn from that saying of the apostle before mentioned, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, "God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ: God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." From hence they seek to infer, That Christ fully perfected the work of reconciliation, while he was on earth.

But when the apostle speaks in the perfect time,

Digitized by Google

saying, "He hath reconciled us," he speaks of himself and the saints; who having received the grace of God purchased by Christ, were through faith in him actually reconciled. But as to the world, he saith *reconciling* not *reconciled;* which *reconciling*, though it denotes a time somewhat past, yet it is by the imperfect time, denoting that the thing begun was not perfected. Again, this very place showeth that no other reconciliation is intended, but the opening of a door of mercy upon God's part, and a removing of wrath for sins that are past; so as men, notwithstanding their sins, are placed in a capacity of salvation: for the apostle, in the following verse, saith, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." For if their reconciliation had already been perfectly accomplished, what need any entreating then to be reconciled? Ambassadors are not sent after a peace already perfected, and reconciliation made, to entreat for a reconciliation.

Secondly, They object, verse 21st of the same chapter, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." From whence they argue, That as our sin is imputed to Christ, who had no sin; so Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, without our being righteous.

But though "Christ bare our sins," and "suffered for us," and was among men "accounted a sinner," and "numbered among transgressors;" yet that God reputed him a sinner, is nowhere proved. For it is

Heb. vii. 26.
1 Pet. ii. 22.

Digitized by Google

said, He was found before him holy, harmless, and undefiled, neither was there found any guile in his mouth. Neither did he ever die that we should be reputed righteous, though no more really such than he was a sinner. By his "being made sin for us" must be understood his suffering for our sins, that we might be made partakers of the grace purchased by him; by the workings whereof we are made the righteousness of God in him. For that the apostle understood here a being made really righteous, and not merely a being reputed such, appears by what follows, seeing in verses 14, 15, 16, of the following chapter, he argues largely against any supposed agreement of light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness; which must needs be admitted, if men are to be reckoned engrafted in Christ, and real members of him, merely by an imputative righteousness, wholly without them, while they themselves are actually unrighteous. And indeed it may be thought strange, how some men have made this so fundamental an article of their faith, which is so contrary to the whole strain of the gospel: a thing which Christ in none of all his sermons and gracious speeches ever willed any to rely upon; always recommending to us works, as instrumental in our justification. And the more it is to be admired at, because that sentence or term, so frequently in their mouths, and so often pressed by them, as the very basis of their hope and confidence, to wit, The imputed righteousness of Christ, is not to be found in all the Bible, at least as to my observation.

I COME THEN to the second thing proposed by me, which

Digitized by Google

is: That it is by this inward birth, or Christ formed within, that we are justified in the sight of God. I suppose I have said enough already to demonstrate how much we ascribe to the death and sufferings of Christ, as that whereby satisfaction is made to the justice of God, remission of sins obtained, and this grace and seed purchased, by and from which this birth proceeds. The thing now to be proved is, That by Christ Jesus formed in us, we are justified, or made just. Let it be marked, I use *justification* in this sense upon this occasion.

First, then, I prove this by that of the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 11, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." First, This *justified* here understood, must needs be a being really made just, and not a being merely imputed such; else *sanctified* and *washed* might be reputed a being esteemed so, and not a being really so. As none are said to be sanctified that are really unholy, while they are such; so neither can any be truly said to be justified, while they actually remain unjust. Only this verb *justify* hath, in a metaphorical and figurative sense, been otherwise taken, to wit, in a law sense; as when a man really guilty of a crime is freed from the punishment of his sin, he is said to be justified; that is, put in the place as if he were just.

Now is it not strange, that men should be so facile in a matter of so great concernment, as to build the stress of their acceptance with God upon a mere borrowed and metaphorical signification, to the excluding, or at least esteeming

Digitized by Google

that not necessary, without which the scripture saith expressly. "No man shall ever see God?" For if holiness be requisite and necessary, of which this is said, then must good works also; unless our opposers can show us a holy man without good works. But the question is not so much of the use of the word where it is passingly or occasionally used, as where the very doctrine of justification is handled. Where indeed to mistake it, viz., in its proper place, so as to content ourselves with an imaginary justification, while God requires a real, is of most dangerous consequence.

That excellent saying of the apostle, so much observed, Rom. viii. 30, "Whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified," is commonly called the golden chain, as being acknowledged to comprehend the method and order of salvation. And therefore, if *justified* were not understood here in its proper signification of being made just, sanctification would be excluded out of this chain. And truly it is very worthy of observation, that the apostle, in this succinct and compendious account, makes the word *justified* to comprehend all betwixt calling and glorifying; thereby clearly insinuating, that the being really righteous is that only medium by which from our calling we pass to glorification. Almost all do acknowledge the word to be so taken in this place; and not only so, but most of those who oppose are forced to acknowledge, that as this is the most proper, so the most common signification of it.

As then by justification is to be understood a really being made righteous, I do boldly affirm, and that not only from

Digitized by Google

a notional knowledge, but from a real, inward experimental feeling of the thing, that the immediate, nearest cause of a man's justification in the sight of God, is, the revelation of Jesus Christ in the soul, changing, altering, and renewing the mind, by whom (even the author of this inward work) thus formed and revealed, we are truly justified and accepted in the sight of God. For it is as we are thus covered and clothed with him, in whom the Father is always well pleased, that we may draw near to God, and stand with confidence before his throne, being purged by the blood of Jesus inwardly poured into our souls, and clothed with his life and righteousness therein revealed. And this is that order and method of salvation held forth by the apostle in that divine saying, Rom. v. 10: "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." For the apostle first holding forth the reconciliation wrought by the death of Christ, wherein God is near to receive and redeem man, holds forth his salvation and justification to be by the life of Jesus. Now, that this life is an inward, spiritual thing revealed in the soul whereby it is renewed and brought forth out of death, where it naturally has been by the fall, and so quickened and made alive unto God, the same apostle shows, Eph. ii. 5: "Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ (by whose grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together." Now this none will deny to be the inward work of renovation, and therefore the apostle gives that reason of their being saved by grace, which is the inward virtue and power

Digitized by Google

of Christ in the soul. Of the revelation of this inward life the apostle also speaketh, 2 Cor. iv. 10: "That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." Now this inward life of Jesus is that whereby, as is before observed, he said, "We are saved."

As the original and fundamental cause of our justification is the love of God manifested in the appearance of Jesus Christ in the flesh, who by his life, death, sufferings, and obedience, made a way for our reconciliation, and became a sacrifice for the remission of sins that are past, and purchased unto us this seed and grace, from which this birth arises, and in which Jesus Christ is inwardly received, formed, and brought forth in us, in his own pure and holy image of righteousness, by which our souls live unto God, and are clothed with him, and have put him on, even as the scripture speaks, Eph. iv. 23, 24; Gal. iii. 27, we stand justified and saved in and by him, and by his Spirit and grace; Rom. iii. 24; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Tit. iii. 7. So again, reciprocally, we are hereby made partakers of the fulness of his merits, and his cleansing blood is near, to wash away every sin and infirmity, and to heal all our backslidings, as often as we turn towards him by unfeigned repentance, and become renewed by his Spirit. Those then that find him thus raised, and ruling in them, have a true ground of hope to believe that they are justified by his blood. But let not any deceive themselves, so as to foster themselves in a vain hope and confidence, that by the death and sufferings of Christ they are justified, so long as "sin lies at their door," Gen. iv. 7, iniquity prevails, and they remain

Digitized by Google

yet unrenewed and unregenerate; lest it be said unto them, "I know you not." Let that saying of Christ be remembered, "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter, but he that doth the will of my Father," Matt. vii. 21. To which let these excellent sayings of the beloved disciple be added; "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things," 1 John iii. 7 and 20.

THE THIRD thing proposed to be considered is, concerning the necessity of good works to justification.

In this matter we use the plain language of the holy scripture, which saith expressly, James ii. 24, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." If no man can be justified without faith, and no faith be living, nor yet available to justification without works, then works are necessary to justification.

This truth is so apparent and evident in the scriptures, that for the proof of it we might transcribe most of the precepts of the gospel. I shall instance a few, which of themselves do so clearly assert the thing in question, that they need no commentary, nor farther demonstration, Heb. xii. 14, "Without holiness no man shall see God." Matt. vii. 21, "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven." John xiii. 17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." 1 Cor. vii. 19, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision

Digitized by Google

is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city:" and many more that might be instanced.

But some object, That works are not necessary to justification: First, because of that saying of Christ, Luke xvii. 10, "When ye shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants," etc.

I answer; As to God we are indeed unprofitable, for he needeth nothing, neither can we add any thing unto him: but as to ourselves we are not unprofitable; else it might be said, that it is not profitable for a man to keep God's commandments; which would contradict Christ's doctrine throughout. Doth not Christ, Matt. v., through all those beatitudes, pronounce men blessed for their purity, for their meekness, for their peaceableness, etc.? And is not then that for which Christ pronounceth men blessed, profitable unto them? Moreover, Matt. xxv. 21, 23, Doth not Christ pronounce the men "good and faithful servants" that improved their talents? Was not their doing of that then profitable unto them?

Secondly, They object those sayings of the apostle, where he excludes the deeds of the law from justification; as first, Rom. iii. 20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." And verse 28, "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law."

In answer to this objection, I say, there is a great dif-

Digitized by Google

ference betwixt the works of the law, and those of grace, or of the gospel. The first are excluded, the second not, but are necessary. The first are those which are performed in man's own will, and by his strength, in a conformity to the outward law and letter; and therefore are man's own imperfect works, or works of the law, which makes nothing perfect: and to this belong all the ceremonies, purifications, washings, and traditions of the Jews. The second are the works of the Spirit of grace in the heart, wrought in conformity to the inward and spiritual law; which works are not wrought in man's will, nor by his power and ability, but in and by the power and Spirit of Christ in us, and therefore are pure and perfect in their kind, as shall hereafter be proved, and may be called Christ's works, for that he is the immediate author and worker of them: such works we affirm absolutely necessary to justification, so that a man cannot be justified without them; and all faith without them is dead and useless, as the apostle James saith.

Now, that such a distinction is to be admitted, and that the works excluded by the apostle in the matter of justification are of the first kind, will appear if we consider the occasion of the apostle's mentioning this, as well here, as throughout his epistle to the Galatians, where he speaks of this matter and to this purpose at large: which was this, That whereas many of the Gentiles, that were not of the race or seed of Abraham, as concerning the flesh, were come to be converted to the Christian faith and to believe in him, some of those, that were of the Jewish proselytes, thought to subject the faithful and believing Gentiles to

Digitized by Google

the legal ceremonies and observations, as necessary to their justification: this gave the apostle Paul occasion at length, in his epistle to the Romans, Galatians, and elsewhere, to show the use and tendency of the law, and of its works, and to contradistinguish them from the faith of Christ, and the righteousness thereof; showing how the former was ceased and become ineffectual, the other remaining, and yet necessary.

And that the works excluded by the apostle are of this kind of works of the law, appears by the whole strain of his epistle to the Galatians, chap. i., ii., iii., and iv. For after, in chap. iv., he upbraideth them for their returning unto the observation of days and times, and that, in the beginning of chap. v., he showeth them their folly, and the evil consequence of adhering to the ceremonies of circumcision, then he adds, ver. 6, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth, but faith, which worketh by love;" and thus he concludes again, chap. vi., ver. 15, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." From which places appeareth that distinction of works before-mentioned, whereof the one is excluded, the other necessary to justification. For the apostle showeth here, that circumcision, which word is often used to comprehend the whole ceremonies and legal performances of the Jews, is not necessary, nor doth avail. Here then are the works which are excluded, by which no man is justified; but faith, which worketh by love, but the new creature, this is that which availeth, which is absolutely necessary: for faith, that work-

Digitized by Google

eth by love, cannot be without works; for, as it is said in the same fifth chapter, ver. 22, love is a work of the Spirit; also the new creature, if it avail and be necessary, cannot be without works; seeing it is natural for it to bring forth works of righteousness.

For a full answer to this objection, and for the establishing of this doctrine of good works, I shall instance another saying of the same apostle Paul, Tit. iii. 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is generally granted by all, that *saved* is here all one as if it had been said *justified*. Now there are two kinds of works here mentioned: one by which we are not saved, that is, not justified; and another by which we are saved, or justified. The first, the works of righteousness which we have wrought, that is, which we in our first fallen nature, by our own strength, have wrought, our own legal performances, and therefore may truly and properly be called ours, whatever specious appearances they may have. And that it must needs and ought to be so understood, doth appear from the other part: "By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" seeing regeneration is a work, comprehensive of many good works, even of all those which are called the fruits of the Spirit.

Now in case it should be objected, That these may also be called ours, because wrought in us, and also by us many times as instruments, I answer; It is far otherwise than the former: for in the first we are yet alive in our own

Digitized by Google

natural state, unrenewed, working of ourselves, seeking to save ourselves, by endeavoring a conformity to the outward letter of the law. But in this second we are "crucified with Christ," we are become "dead with him," have "partaken of the fellowship of his sufferings," are made "conformable to his death;" and our first man, our "old man with all his deeds," as well the openly wicked as the seemingly righteous, are all buried and nailed to the cross of Christ; and so it is no more we, but Christ alive in us, the worker in us.

And to conclude this proposition, let none be so bold as to mock God, supposing themselves justified and accepted in the sight of God, by virtue of Christ's death and sufferings, while they remain unsanctified and unjustified in their own hearts, and polluted in their sins, lest their Job viii. 13. hope prove that of the hypocrite, which perisheth. Neither let any imagine that they can by their own works, or by the performance of any ceremonies or traditions, or by the giving of gold or money, or by afflicting their bodies in will-worship and voluntary humility, or striving to conform their way to the outward letter of the law, flatter themselves that they merit before God, or draw a debt upon him, or that any man or men have power to make such kind of things effectual to their justification, lest they be found foolish boasters and strangers to Christ and his righteousness indeed. But blessed for ever are they, that having truly had a sense of their own unworthiness and sinfulness, and having seen all their own endeavors and performances fruitless and vain, and beheld their own

Digitized by Google

emptiness, and the vanity of their vain hopes, faith, and confidence, while they remained inwardly pricked, pursued, and condemned by God's holy witness in their hearts, and so having applied themselves thereto, and suffered his grace to work in them, are become changed and renewed in the spirit of their minds, passed from death to life, and know Jesus arisen in them, working both the will and the deed; and so having "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," in effect are clothed with him, and partake of his righteousness and nature; such can draw near to the Lord with boldness, and know their acceptance in and by him, in whom, and in as many as are found in him, the Father is well pleased.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION VIII.

CONCERNING PERFECTION.

IN whom this pure and holy birth is fully brought forth, the body of death and sin comes to be crucified and removed, and their hearts united and subjected to the truth; so as not to obey any suggestions or temptations of the evil one, but to be free from actual sinning and transgressing of the law of God, and in that respect perfect: yet doth this perfection still admit of a growth; and there remaineth always in some part a possibility of sinning, where the mind doth not most diligently and watchfully attend unto the Lord.

SINCE WE HAVE placed justification in the revelation of Jesus Christ formed and brought forth in the heart, there working his works of righteousness, and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, the question is, How far he may prevail in us while we are in this life, or we over our souls, enemies,-in and by his strength? Those that plead for justification wholly without them, merely by imputative righteousness, denying the necessity of being clothed with real and inward righteousness, do consequently affirm, "That it

Digitized by Google

is impossible for a man, even the best of men, to be free of sin in this life, which, they say, no man ever was; but on the contrary, that none can, neither of himself, nor by any grace received in this life [O wicked saying against the power of God's grace], keep the commandments of God perfectly; but that every man doth break the commandments in thought, word, and deed." We on the contrary, though we freely acknowledge this of the natural fallen man, in his first state, whatever his profession or pretence may be, so long as he is unconverted and unregenerate, yet we do believe, that to those in whom Christ comes to be formed, and the new man brought forth, and born of the incorruptible seed, as that birth, and man in union therewith, naturally doth the will of God, it is possible so far to keep to it, as not to be found daily transgressors of the law of God.

FOR THE MORE clear stating of the controversy, let it be considered, that we place not this possibility in man's own will and capacity, as he is a man, the son of fallen Adam, or as he is in his natural state, however wise or knowing, or however much endued with a notional and literal knowledge of Christ, thereby endeavoring a conformity to the letter of the law, as it is outward.

We attribute it wholly to man, as he is born again, renewed in his mind, raised by Christ, knowing Christ alive, reigning and ruling in him, and guiding and leading him by his Spirit, and revealing in him the law of the Spirit of life; which not only manifests and reproves sin, but also gives power to come out of it.

Digitized by Google

By this we understand not such a perfection as may not daily admit of a growth, and consequently mean not as if we were to be as pure, holy, and perfect as God in his divine attributes of wisdom, knowledge, and purity; but only a perfection proportionable and answerable to man's measure, whereby we are kept from transgressing the law of God, and enabled to answer what he requires of us; even as he that improved his two talents so as to make four of them, perfected his work, and was so accepted of his Lord as to be called a "good and faithful servant," nothing less than he that made his five ten. Even as a little gold is perfect gold in its kind, as well as a great mass, and a child hath a perfect body as well as a man, though it daily grow more and more. Thus Christ is said, Luke ii. 52, to have "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man;" though before that time he had never sinned, and was no doubt perfect, in a true and proper sense.

Though a man may witness this for a season, and therefore all ought to press after it; yet we do not affirm but those that have attained it in a measure may, by the wiles and temptations of the enemy, fall into iniquity, and lose it sometimes, if they be not watchful, and do not diligently attend to that of God in the heart. And we doubt not but many good and holy men, who have arrived to everlasting life, have had divers ebbings and flowings of this kind; for though every sin weakens a man in his spiritual condition, yet it doth not so as to destroy him altogether, or render him incapable of rising again.

Digitized by Google

Though I affirm, that after a man hath arrived at such a state, in which he may be able not to sin, yet he may sin: nevertheless, I will not affirm that a state is not attainable in this life, in which to do righteousness may be so natural to the regenerate soul, that in the stability of that condition he cannot sin. Others may speak more certainly of this state, if they have arrived at it. With respect to myself, I speak modestly, because I ingenuously confess that I have not yet attained it; but I cannot deny that there is such a state, as it seems to be so clearly asserted by the apostle, 1 John iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

THE DOCTRINE, That the saints nor can nor ever will be free of sinning in this life, is inconsistent with the wisdom of God, and with his glorious power and majesty, "who Hab. i. 13. is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;" who having purposed in himself to gather to him a chosen people that should worship him, and be witnesses for him on earth, doth also no doubt sanctify and purify them.

It is inconsistent with the justice of God. For since he requires purity from his children, and commands them to abstain from every iniquity, and since his wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, it must needs follow, that he hath capacitated man to answer his will, or else that he requires more than he has given power to perform; which is to declare him openly unjust, and with the slothful servant to be a hard master.

This evil doctrine is highly injurious to Jesus Christ,

Digitized by Google

and greatly derogates from the power and virtue of his sacrifice, and renders his coming and ministry, as to the great end of it, ineffectual. For Christ, as for other ends, so principally he appeared for the removing of sin, for the gathering a righteous generation, that might serve the Lord in purity of mind, and walk before him in fear, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and that evangelical perfection which the law could not do. Hence he is said, Tit. ii. 14, "to have given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This is certainly spoken of the saints while upon earth. Moreover, it is said expressly, 1 John iii. 5, 8, That "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil; and ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins." And lest any should wrest this place of the apostle, as if it were spoken only of taking away the guilt of sin, as if it related not to this life, the apostle, as if of purpose to obviate such an objection, adds in the following verses, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not," etc. The end of Christ's coming is expressed by the apostle, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27, "Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word: that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Now if Christ hath really thus answered the thing he came for, then the members of his church are not always sinning in thought, word, and

Digitized by Google

deed, or there is no difference betwixt being sanctified and unsanctified, clean and unclean, holy and unholy, being daily blemished with sin, and being without blemish.

This doctrine renders the work of the ministry, the preaching of the word, the writing of the scripture, and the prayers of holy men altogether useless and ineffectual. Pastors and teachers are said to be "given for the perfecting of the saints," etc., "until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And if for effectuating this perfection in the saints the ministry be appointed of God, do not such as deny the possibility hereof render the ministry useless, and of no profit? The apostle tells us, 2 Tim. iii. 17, That the "scriptures are for making the man of God perfect;" and if this be denied to be attainable in this life, then the scriptures are of no profit. The holy apostles prayed earnestly for this end, and therefore no doubt believed it attainable, Col. iv. 12, "Laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect," etc., 1 Thess. iii. 13; and v. 23, etc.

As this perfection or freedom from sin is attained and made possible where the gospel and inward law of the Spirit is received and known, so the ignorance hereof has been and is an occasion of opposing this truth. For man, not minding the light or law within his heart, which not only discovers sin but leads out of it, and so being a stranger to the new life and birth that is born of God, which naturally does his will, and cannot of its own nature transgress the commandments of God, doth, I say, in his natu-

Digitized by Google

ral state look at the commandments as they are without him in the letter; and labors in his own will after a conformity to the law as it is without him, which he can never obtain, but finds the more he wrestles, the more he falleth short. So this is the Jew still in effect, with his carnal commandment, with the law without, in the first covenant state, which "makes not the comers thereunto perfect, as pertaining to the conscience," Heb. ix. 9: though they may have here a notion of Christianity, and an external faith in Christ. This hath made them strain and wrest the scriptures for an imputative righteousness wholly without them, to cover their impurities; and this hath made them imagine an acceptance with God possible, though they suppose it impossible ever to obey Christ's commands. But alas! O deceived souls! that will not avail in the day wherein God will judge every man according to his work, whether good or bad. It will not save thee to say, it was necessary for thee to sin daily in thought, word, and deed; for such as do so have certainly obeyed unrighteousness; and what is provided for such but tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath; even as glory, honor, and peace, immortality and eternal life, to such as have done good, and patiently continued in well-doing.

So then, if thou desirest to know this perfection and freedom from sin possible for thee, turn thy mind to the light and spiritual law of Christ in the heart, and suffer the reproofs thereof; bear the judgment and indignation of God upon the unrighteous part in thee as therein it is revealed, which Christ hath made tolerable for thee, and so

Digitized by Google

suffer judgment in thee to be brought forth into victory, and thus come to partake of the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and be made conformable unto his death, that thou mayest feel thyself crucified with him to the world by the power of his cross in thee; so that that life that sometimes was alive in thee to this world, and the love and lusts thereof, may die, and a new life be raised, by which thou mayest live henceforward to God, and not to or for thyself; and with the apostle thou mayest say, Gal. ii. 20: It is no more I, "but Christ liveth in me;" and then thou wilt be a Christian indeed, and not in name only, as too many are; then thou wilt know what it is to have "put off the old man with his deeds," who indeed sins daily in thought, word, and deed; and to have put on the new man, that is renewed in holiness, after the image of him that hath created him: and thou wilt witness thyself to be God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and so not to sin always. And to this new man "Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light;" yea, the commandments of God are not unto this man grievous; for it is his meat and drink to be found fulfilling the will of God.

Matt. xi. 30.
1 John v. 3.

This perfection or freedom from sin is possible, because many have attained it, according to the express testimony of the scripture; some before the law, and some under the law, through witnessing and partaking of the benefit and effect of the gospel, and much more many under the gospel. As first, it is written of Enoch, Gen. v. 22, 24, that he walked with God, which no man while sinning can; nor

Digitized by Google

doth the scripture record any failing of his. It is said of Noah, Gen. vi. 9, and of Job, i. 8, and of Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6, that they were perfect; but under the gospel, see what the apostle saith of many saints in general, Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," etc. I judge while they were sitting in these heavenly places, they could not be daily sinning in thought, word, and deed.

I SHALL PROCEED now to answer the objections of our opposers. I shall begin with their chief and great argument, which is the words of the apostle, 1 John i. 8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

But he saith not, We sin daily in thought, word, and deed. As Augustine well observed, in his exposition upon the epistle to the Galatians, It is one thing not to sin, and another thing not to have sin. The apostle's words are not, If we say we sin not, or commit not sin daily, but "if we say we have no sin:" and betwixt these two there is a manifest difference; for in respect all have sinned, as we freely acknowledge, all may be said in a sense to have sin. Again, sin may be taken for the seed of sin, which may be in those that are redeemed from actual sinning; but as to the temptations and provocations proceeding from it being resisted by the servants of God, and not yielded to, they

Digitized by Google

are the devil's sin that tempteth, not the man's that is preserved. This being considered, as also how positive and plain once and again the same apostle is in that very epistle, as in divers places, is it equal or rational to strain this one place, to contradict not only other positive expressions of his, but the whole tendency of his epistle, and of the rest of the holy commands and precepts of the scripture?

Their second objection is from two places of scripture, much of one signification: the one is, 1 Kings viii. 46, "For there is no man that sinneth not." The other is, Eccles. vii. 20, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not."

I answer, These affirm nothing of a daily and continual sinning, so as never to be redeemed from it; but only that all have sinned, or that there is none that doth not sin, though not always, so as never to cease to sin; and in this lies the question. Yea, in that place of the Kings he speaks within two verses of the returning of such "with all their souls and hearts;" which implies a possibility of leaving off sin. Secondly, There is a respect to be had to the seasons and dispensations; for if it should be granted that in Solomon's time there was none that sinned not, it will not follow that there are none such now, or that it is a thing not now attainable by the grace of God under the gospel.

They object some expressions of the apostle Paul, Rom. vii. 19, "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." And verse 24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Digitized by Google

I answer, This place infers nothing, unless it were apparent that the apostle here were speaking of his own condition, and not rather in the person of others, or what he himself had sometimes borne. There is nothing in the text that doth clearly signify the apostle to be speaking of himself, or of a condition he was then under, or was always to be under; yea, on the contrary, in the former chapter, as afore is at large shown, he declares, they were dead to sin; demanding how such should yet live any longer therein? It appears that the apostle personated one not yet come to a spiritual condition, in that he saith, verse 14, "But I am carnal, sold under sin." Now is it to be imagined that the apostle Paul, as to his own proper condition, when he wrote that epistle, was a carnal man, who in chap. i. testifies of himself, That he was separated to be an apostle, capable to impart to the Romans spiritual gifts; and chap. viii. 2, That "the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus" had "made him free from the law of sin and death?" So then he was not carnal. As his calling himself carnal in chap. vii. cannot be understood of his own proper state, neither can the rest of what he speaks there of that kind be so understood: yea, after, verse 24, where he makes that exclamation, he adds in the next verse, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" signifying that by him he witnessed deliverance; and so goeth on, showing how he had obtained it in the next chapter, viz., viii. ver. 35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And ver. 37, "But in all these things we are more than conquerors:" and in the last verse, "Nothing shall be able to separate

Digitized by Google

us," etc. But wherever there is a continuing in sin, there is a separation in some degree, and whoever committeth the least sin, is overcome of it, and so in that respect is not a conqueror, but conquered. This condition then, which the apostle plainly testified he with some others had obtained, could not consist with continual remaining and abiding in sin.

They object the faults and sins of several eminent saints, as Noah, David, etc. But that doth not at all prove the case: for the question is not whether good men may not fall into sin, which is not denied; but whether it be not possible for them not to sin?

BLESSED THEN are they that believe in him, who is both able and willing to deliver as many as come to him through true repentance from all sin, and do not resolve to be the devil's servants all their lifetime, but daily go on forsaking unrighteousness, and forgetting those things that are behind, "press forward toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" such shall not find their faith and confidence to be in vain, but in due time shall be made conquerors through him in whom they have believed; and so overcoming, shall be established as pillars in the house of God, so as they shall go no more out, Rev. iii. 12.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION IX.

CONCERNING PERSEVERANCE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF FALLING FROM GRACE.

ALTHOUGH this gift and inward grace of God be sufficient to work out salvation, yet in those in whom it is resisted it both may and doth become their condemnation. Moreover they in whose hearts it hath wrought in part to purify and sanctify them in order to their further perfection, may, by disobedience, fall from it, turn it to wantonness, Jude 4, make shipwreck of faith, 1 Tim. i. 19, and after having tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, again fall away, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, yet such an increase and stability in the truth may in this life be attained, from which there can be no total apostasy.

AS UPON THE one hand they err who affirm that the least degree of true and saving grace cannot be fallen from, so do they err on the other hand that deny any such stability to be attained from which there cannot be a total and final apostasy. And betwixt these two extremes lieth the truth apparent in the scriptures, which God hath revealed unto us by the testimony of his Spirit, and which also we are made sensible of by our own experience.

Digitized by Google

I freely acknowledge that it is good for all to be humble, and in this respect not over confident, so as to foster themselves in iniquity, or lie down in security, as if they had attained this condition, seeing watchfulness and diligence is of indispensable necessity to all mortal men, so long as they breathe in this world; for God will have this to be the constant practice of a Christian, that thereby he may be the more fit to serve him, and better armed against all the temptations of the enemy. For since the wages of sin is death, there is no man, while he sinneth, and is subject thereunto, but may lawfully suppose himself capable of perishing. Hence the apostle Paul himself saith, 1 Cor. ix. 27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Here the apostle supposes it possible for him to be a castaway, and yet it may be judged he was far more advanced in the inward work of regeneration, when he wrote that epistle, than many who nowadays too presumptuously suppose they cannot fall away, because they feel themselves to have attained some small degree of true grace. But the apostle makes use of this supposition or possibility of his being a castaway, as I before observed, as an inducement to him to be watchful; "I keep under my body, lest," etc. Nevertheless the same apostle, at another time, in the sense and feeling of God's holy power, and in the dominion thereof, finding himself a conqueror there-through over sin and his soul's enemies, maketh no difficulty to affirm, Rom. viii. 38: "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor

Digitized by Google

angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," which clearly showeth that he had attained a condition from which he knew he could not fall away.

It appears such a condition is attainable, because we are exhorted to it; and the scripture never proposeth to us things impossible. Such an exhortation we have from the apostle, 2 Pet. i. 10: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall." And though there be a condition here proposed, yet since we have already proved that it is possible to fulfil this condition, then also the promise annexed thereunto may be attained. And since, where assurance is wanting, there is still a place left for doubtings and despairs, if we should affirm it never attainable, then should there never be a place known by the saints in this world, wherein they might be free of doubting and despair; which is contrary to the manifest experience of thousands.

God hath given to many of his saints and children, and is ready to give unto all a full and certain assurance that they are his, and that no power shall be able to pluck them out of his hand. And that there is such assurance attainable in this life, the scripture abundantly declareth, both in general and as to particular persons. As first, Rev. iii. 12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out," etc., which containeth a general promise unto all. Hence the apostle

Digitized by Google

speaks of some that are sealed, 2 Cor. i. 22: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts:" wherefore the Spirit so sealing is called the earnest or "pledge of our inheritance," Eph. i. 13, "In whom ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." And therefore the apostle Paul, not only in that of the Romans above noted, declareth himself to have attained that condition, but 2 Tim. iv. 7, he affirmeth, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," which also many good men have and do witness. There have been both of old and of late that have turned the grace of God into wantonness, and have fallen from their faith and integrity; thence we may safely conclude such a falling away possible. We also see that some of old and of late have attained a certain assurance, some time before they departed, that they should inherit eternal life, and have accordingly died in that good hope, of and concerning whom the Spirit of God testified that they are saved. Wherefore we also see such a state is attainable in this life, from which there is not a falling away: for seeing the Spirit of God did so testify, it was not possible that they should perish, concerning whom he who cannot lie thus bare witness.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION X.

CONCERNING THE MINISTRY.

AS by the light or gift of God all true knowledge in things spiritual is received and revealed, so by the same, as it is manifested and received in the heart, by the strength and power thereof, every true minister of the gospel is ordained, prepared, and supplied in the work of the ministry; and by the leading, moving, and drawing hereof, ought every evangelist and Christian pastor to be led and ordered in his labor and work of the gospel, both as to the place where, as to the persons to whom, and as to the time wherein he is to minister. Moreover, they who have this authority may and ought to preach the gospel, though without human commission or literature; as on the other hand, they who want the authority of this divine gift, however learned, or authorized by the commission of men and churches, are to be esteemed but as deceivers, and not true ministers of the gospel. Also they who have received this holy and unspotted gift, as they have freely received it, so are they freely to give it, without hire or bargaining, far less to use it as a trade to get money by: yet if God hath called any one from their employment or trades, by which they acquire their livelihood, Matt. x. 8.

Digitized by Google

it may be lawful for such, according to the liberty which they feel given them in the Lord, to receive such temporals (to wit, what may be needful for them for meat and clothing) as are given them freely and cordially by those, to whom they have communicated spirituals.

THE CHURCH, according to the grammatical signification of the word, as it is used in the holy scripture, signifies an assembly or gathering of many into one place; being no other thing but the society or company of such as God hath called out of the world, and worldly spirit, to walk in his Light and Life. The church then so defined is to be considered, as it comprehends all that are thus called and gathered truly by God, both such as are yet in this inferior world, and such as having already laid down the earthly tabernacle, are passed into their heavenly mansions, which together do make up the one catholic church, concerning which there is so much controversy. Out of which church we freely acknowledge there can be no salvation; because under this church and its denomination are comprehended all, and as many, of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people they be, though outwardly strangers, and remote from those who profess Christ and Christianity in words, and have the benefit of the scriptures; all such as become obedient to the holy light and testimony of God in their hearts, so as to become sanctified by it, and cleansed from the evils of their ways.

There may be members therefore of this catholic church

Digitized by Google

both among heathen, Turks, Jews, and all the several sorts of Christians, men and women of integrity and simplicity of heart, who though blinded in some things in their understanding, and perhaps burdened with the superstitions and formality of the several sects in which they are engrossed, yet being upright in their hearts before the Lord, chiefly aiming and laboring to be delivered from iniquity, and loving to follow righteousness, are by the secret touches of this holy light in their souls enlivened and quickened, thereby secretly united to God, and there-through become true members of this catholic church. Now the church in this respect hath been in being in all generations; for God never wanted some such witnesses for him, though many times slighted, and not much observed by this world; and therefore this church, though still in being, hath been oftentimes as it were invisible, in that it hath not come under the observation of the men of this world, being, as saith the scripture, Jer. iii. 14, "one of a city, and two of a family." And yet though the church thus considered may be as it were hid from wicked men, as not then gathered into a visible fellowship, yea and not observed even by some that are members of it, yet may there notwithstanding many belong to it; as when Elijah complained he was left alone, 1 Kings xix. 18, God answered unto him, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed their knees to the image of Baal;" whence the apostle argues, Rom. xi., the being of a remnant in his day.

Secondly, The church is to be considered as it signifies a certain number of persons gathered by God's Spirit, and

Digitized by Google

by the testimony of some of his servants raised up for that end, unto the belief of the true principles and doctrines of the Christian faith, who through their hearts being united by the same love, and their understandings informed in the same truths, assemble together to wait upon God, to worship him, and to bear a joint testimony for the truth against error, suffering for the same, and so becoming through this fellowship as one family and household in certain respects, do each of them watch over, teach, instruct, and care for one another, according to their several measures and attainments: such were the churches of the primitive times gathered by the apostles.

To BE A MEMBER then of the Catholic church, there is need of the inward calling of God by his light in the heart, and a being leavened into the nature and spirit of it, so as to forsake unrighteousness, and be turned to righteousness, and in the inwardness of the mind, to be cut out of the wild olive tree of our own first fallen nature, and ingrafted into Christ by his Word and Spirit in the heart.

To be a member of a particular church of Christ, as this inward work is indispensably necessary, so is also the outward profession of, and belief in, Jesus Christ, and those holy truths delivered by his Spirit in the scriptures; seeing the testimony of the Spirit recorded in the scriptures, doth answer the testimony of the same Spirit in the heart, even as face answereth face in a glass. Hence it follows, that the inward work of holiness, and forsaking iniquity, is necessary in every respect to the being a member in the church of Christ; and that the outward profession is neces-

Digitized by Google

sary to be a member of a particular gathered church, but not to the being a member of the Catholic church.

THE PARTICULAR churches of Christ, gathered in the apostles' days, soon after beginning to decay as to the inward life, came to be overgrown with several errors, and the hearts of the professors of Christianity to be leavened with the old spirit and conversation of the world. Yet it pleased God for some centuries to preserve that life in many, whom he emboldened with zeal to stand and suffer for his name through the ten persecutions: but these being over, the meekness, gentleness, love, long-suffering, goodness, and temperance of Christianity began to be lost. For after that the princes of the earth came to take upon them that profession, and that it ceased to be a reproach to be a Christian, but rather became a means to preferment; men became such by birth and education, and not by conversion and renovation of spirit: then there was none so vile, none so wicked, none so profane, who became not a member of the church. And the teachers and pastors thereof becoming the companions of princes, and so being enriched by their benevolence, and getting vast treasures and estates, became puffed up, and as it were drunken with the vain pomp and glory of this world: and so marshalled themselves in manifold orders and degrees; not without innumerable contests and altercations who should have the precedency.

So the virtue, life, substance, and kernel of the Christian religion came to be lost, and nothing remained but a shadow and image; which dead image or carcass of Christianity,

Digitized by Google

to make it take the better with the superstitious multitude of heathen that were engrossed in it, not by any inward conversion of their hearts, or by becoming less wicked or superstitious, but by a little change in the object of their superstition, not having the inward ornament and life of the Spirit, became decked with many outward and visible orders, and beautified with the gold, silver, precious stones, and the other splendid ornaments of this perishing world; so that this was no more to be accounted the Christian religion, and Christian church, notwithstanding the outward profession, than the dead body of a man is to be accounted a living man; which, however cunningly embalmed, and adorned with ever so much gold or silver, or most precious stones, or sweet ointments, is but a dead body still, without sense, life, or motion. For that apostate church of Rome has introduced no fewer ceremonies and superstitions into the Christian profession, than were either among Jews or heathen; and that there hath been as much pride, covetousness, uncleanness, luxury, profaneness, and atheism among her teachers and chief bishops, as ever was among any sort of people, none need doubt, that have read their own authors.

Now, THOUGH Protestants have reformed from her in some of the most gross points and absurd doctrines relating to the church and ministry, yet, which is to be regretted, they have only lopped the branches, but retain and plead earnestly for the same root, from which these abuses have sprung. The Popish errors concerning the ministry, which they have retained, are most of all to be regretted, by

Digitized by Google

which chiefly the life and power of Christianity is barred out among them, and they kept in death, barrenness and dryness: there being nothing more hurtful than an error in this respect. For where a false and corrupt ministry entereth, all manner of other evils follow upon it. The whole backslidings of the Jewish congregation of old are hereto ascribed: "The leaders of my people have caused them to err." The whole writings of the prophets are full of such complaints; and for this cause, under the New Testament, we are so often warned and guarded to "beware of false prophets, and false teachers," etc. What may be thought then, where all, as to this, is out of order; where both the foundation, call, qualifications, maintenance and whole discipline are different from and opposite to the ministry of the primitive church; yea, and necessarily tend to the shutting out of a spiritual ministry, and the bringing in and establishing of a carnal?

THAT THEN WHICH comes first to be questioned in this matter, is concerning the call of a minister; to wit, What maketh, or how cometh a man to be, a minister, pastor, or teacher in the church of Christ?

We answer; By the inward power and virtue of the Spirit of God. For, as saith our proposition, Having received the true knowledge of things spiritual by the Spirit of God, without which they cannot be known, and being by the same in measure purified and sanctified, he comes thereby to be called and moved to minister to others; being able to speak, from a living experience, of what he himself is a witness; and his words and ministry, proceeding

Digitized by Google

from the inward power and virtue, reach to the heart of his hearers, and make them approve of him, and be subject unto him. Our opposers are forced to confess, that this were indeed desirable and best; but this they will not have to be absolutely necessary.

But all ministers of the New Testament ought to be ministers of the Spirit, and not of the letter, according to that of 2 Cor. iii. 6, and as the old Latin hath it, "Not by the letter, but by the Spirit." But how can a man be a minister of the Spirit, who is not inwardly called by it, and who looks not upon the operation and testimony of the Spirit as essential to his call?

Christ proclaims them all thieves and robbers, that enter not by him the door into the sheepfold, but climb up some other way; whom the sheep ought not to hear: but such as come in without the call, movings, and leadings of the Spirit of Christ, wherewith he leads his children into all truth, come in certainly not by Christ, who is the door, but some other way, and therefore are not true shepherds. John x. 1.

To ALL THIS THEY object the succession of the church; alleging, That since Christ gave a call to his apostles and disciples, they have conveyed that call to their successors, having power to ordain pastors and teachers; by which power the authority of ordaining and making ministers and pastors is successively conveyed to us; so that such, who are ordained and called by the pastors of the church, are therefore true and lawful ministers; and others, who are not so called, are to be accounted but intruders.

But against this vain succession, as asserted either by the

Digitized by Google

Papists or Protestants as a necessary thing to the call of a minister, I answer; Jesus Christ, as he regardeth not any distinct particular family or nation in the gathering of his children; but only such as are joined to and leavened with his own pure and righteous seed, so neither regards he a bare outward succession, where his pure, immaculate, and righteous life is wanting. He took not the nations into the new covenant, that he might suffer them to fall into the old errors of the Jews, or to approve them in their errors, but that he might gather unto himself a pure people out of the earth. Now this was the great error of the Jews, to think they were the church and people of God, because they could derive their outward succession from Abraham; whereby they reckoned themselves the children of God, as being the offspring of Abraham, who was the Father of the Faithful. But how severely doth the scripture rebuke this vain and frivolous pretence! Telling them, That God is able of the stones to raise children unto Abraham; and that not the outward seed, but those that were found in the faith of Abraham, are the true children of faithful Abraham. Far less then can this pretence hold among Christians, seeing Christ rejects all outward affinity of that kind: These, saith he, are my mother, brethren and sisters, who do the will of my Father which is in heaven: And again; he looked round about him, and said, Who shall do the will of God, these, saith he, are my brethren. So then, such as do not the commands of Christ, as are not found clothed with his righteousness, are not his disciples; and that which a man

Matt. xii. 48, etc. Mark iii. 33, etc.

Digitized by Google

hath not, he cannot give to another: and it is clear, that no man nor church, though truly called of God, and as such having the authority of a church and minister, can any longer retain that authority, than they retain the power, life, and righteousness of Christianity.

It is the life of Christianity, taking place in the heart, that makes a Christian: and so it is a number of such, being alive, joined together in the life of Christianity, that make a church of Christ; and it is all those that are thus alive and quickened, considered together that make the Catholic church of Christ: therefore when this life ceaseth in one, then that one ceaseth to be a Christian, and all power, virtue, and authority, which he had as a Christian, ceaseth with it; so that if he hath been a minister or teacher, he ceaseth to be so any more. Now where all these members lose this life, there the church ceaseth to be, though they still uphold the form, and retain the name: for when that which made them a church, and for which they were a church, ceaseth, then they cease also to be a church: and therefore the Spirit, speaking to the church of Laodicea, because of her lukewarmness, Rev. iii. 16, threateneth to spew her out of his mouth. Now, suppose the church of Laodicea had continued in that lukewarmness, and had come under that condemnation and judgment, though she had retained the name and form of a church, and had had her pastors and ministers, as no doubt she had at that time, yet surely she had been no true church of Christ, nor had the authority of her pastors and teachers been to be regarded, because of an outward succession,

Digitized by Google

though perhaps some of them had it immediately from the apostles. From all which I infer, That since the authority of the Christian church and her pastors is never separated from the inward power, virtue, and righteous life of Christianity; where this ceaseth, that ceaseth also. But our opposers acknowledge, That many, if not most of those, by and through whom they derive this authority, were altogether destitute of this life and virtue of Christianity: therefore they could neither receive, have, nor transmit any Christian authority.

BUT IF IT BE OBJECTED, That though the generality of the bishops and priests of the church of Rome, during the apostasy, were such wicked men; yet Protestants affirm, and thou thyself seemest to acknowledge, that there were some good men among them, whom the Lord regarded, and who were true members of the Catholic church of Christ; might not they then have transmitted this authority?

I answer; This saith nothing, inasmuch as Protestants do not at all lay claim to their ministry as transmitted to them by a direct line of good men; which they can never show, nor yet pretend to; but generally place this succession as inherent in the whole pastors of the apostate church. Neither do they plead their call to be good and valid, because they can derive it through a line of good men, separate and observably distinguishable from the rest of the bishops and clergy of the Romish church; but they derive it as an authority residing in the whole: for they think it heresy, to judge that the quality or condition of the administrator doth any ways invalidate or prejudice his work.

Digitized by Google

As no metaphysical and nice distinctions, that though they were practically as to their own private states enemies to God and Christ, and so servants of Satan; yet they were, by virtue of their office, members and ministers of the church, and so able to transmit the succession; I say, as such invented and frivolous distinctions will not please the Lord God, neither will he be deluded by such, nor make up the glorious body of his church with such mere outside hypocritical shows, nor be beholden to such painted sepulchres to be members of his body, which is sound, pure, and undefiled; so neither will such distinctions satisfy truly tender and Christian consciences. We may well object against these, as the poor man did against the proud prelate, that went about to cover his vain and unchristian-like sumptuousness, by distinguishing that it was not as bishop but as prince he had all that splendor. To which the poor rustic wisely is said to have answered, When the prince goeth to hell, what shall become of the prelate? This notion of succession supposeth that such as were professed necromancers and open servants of Satan were the true successors of the apostles, and in whom the apostolic authority resided, these being the vessels through whom this succession is transmitted; though many of them, as all Protestants and also some Papists confess, attained these offices in the, so called, church not only by such means as Simon Magus sought it, but by much worse, even by witchcraft, traditions, money, treachery, and murder, which Platina himself confesseth of divers bishops of Rome.

BUT SUCH AS OBJECT not this succession of the church,

Digitized by Google

which yet most Protestants begin now to do, distinguish in this matter, affirming, that in a great apostasy, such as was that of the church of Rome, God may raise up some singularly by his Spirit, who from the testimony of the scriptures perceiving the errors into which such as bear the name of Christians are fallen, may instruct and teach them, and then become authorized by the people's joining with and accepting of their ministry only.

But they say, That where a church is reformed, such as they pretend the Protestant churches are, there an ordinary orderly call is necessary; and that of the Spirit, as extraordinary, is not to be sought after.

That the same immediate assistance of the Spirit is not necessary for ministers in a gathered church as well as in gathering one, I see no solid reason alleged for it: for surely Christ's promise was to be with his children to the end of the world, and they need him no less to preserve and guide his church and children than to gather and beget them. And truly this device of Satan, whereby he has got people to put the immediate guidings and leadings of God's Spirit as an extraordinary thing afar off, which their forefathers had, but which they now are neither to wait for nor expect, is a great cause of the growing apostasy upon the many gathered churches, and is one great reason why a dry, dead, barren, lifeless, spiritless ministry, which leavens the people into the same death, doth so much abound, and is so much overspreading even the Protestant nations.

THERE IS ALSO another sort of Protestants, who, denying

Digitized by Google

the necessity of this succession, take another way; affirming, That such as have the benefit of the scriptures, any company of people agreeing in the principles of truth as they find them there declared, may constitute among themselves a church, and may choose to themselves a pastor, who by the church thus constituted and consenting, is authorized, requiring only the assistance and concurrence of the pastors of the neighboring churches, if any such there be; not so much as absolutely necessary to authorize, as decent for order's sake. Also they go so far as to affirm, That in a church so constituted, any gifted brother, as they call them, if he find himself qualified thereto, may instruct, exhort, and preach in the church; though, as not having the pastoral office, he cannot administer those which they call their sacraments.

To this I answer, That this was a good step out of the Babylonish darkness, and no doubt did proceed from a real discovery of the truth. But as to their pretended call from the scripture, I answer, The scripture gives a mere declaration of true things, but no call to particular persons; so that though I believe the things there written to be true, and deny the errors which I find there testified against, yet as to those things which may be my particular duty, I am still to seek; and therefore I can never be informed in the scripture whether I (such a one by name) ought to be a minister. And for the resolving this doubt I must needs recur to the inward and immediate testimony of the Spirit.

HAVING THUS FAR spoken of the call, I shall proceed next to treat of the qualifications and work of a true minister.

Digitized by Google

As I have placed the true call of a minister in the motion of the Holy Spirit, so is the power, life, and virtue thereof, and the pure grace of God that comes therefrom, the chief and most necessary qualification, without which he can no ways perform his duty, neither acceptably to God nor beneficially to men.

That this grace and gift is a necessary qualification to a minister, is clear from that of the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God: if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth." But how can a man be a good steward of that which he hath not? Can ungodly men, that are not gracious themselves, be good stewards of the manifold grace of God? "If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability that God giveth." Now what this ability is, is manifest by the former words, to wit, the gift received, and the grace whereof they are stewards. Neither can it be understood of a mere natural ability, because man in this condition is said "not to know the things of God," and so he cannot minister them to others. And the following words show this also, in that he immediately subjoineth, "that God in all things may be glorified;" but surely God is not glorified, but greatly dishonored, when natural men, from their mere natural ability, meddle in spiritual things, which they neither know nor understand.

THOUGH WE MAKE not human learning necessary, yet we are far from excluding true learning; to wit, that learning

Digitized by Google

which proceedeth from the inward teachings and instructions of the Spirit, whereby the soul learneth the secret ways of the Lord, becomes acquainted with many inward travails and exercises of the mind; and learneth by a living experience how to overcome evil, and the temptations of it, by following the Lord, and walking in his light, and waiting daily for wisdom and knowledge immediately from the revelation thereof; and so layeth up these heavenly and divine lessons in the good treasure of the heart, as honest Mary did the sayings which she heard, and things which she observed; and also out of this treasure of the soul, as the good scribe, brings forth things new and old, according as the same Spirit moves, and gives true liberty, and as the glory of God requires, for whose glory the soul, which is the temple of God, learneth to do all things. This is that good learning which we think necessary to a true minister; by and through which learning a man can well instruct, teach, and admonish in due season, and testify for God from a certain experience; as did David, Solomon, and the holy prophets of old, and the blessed apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who testified of what they had seen, heard, felt, and handled of the word of life, 1 John i. 1.

But let us examine this literature, which they make so necessary to the being of a minister; as in the first place, the knowledge of the tongues, at least the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. The reason of this is, That they may read the scripture, which is their only rule, in the original languages, and thereby be the more capable to comment upon it, and interpret it, etc. That also which made this knowledge be

Digitized by Google

the more prized by the primitive Protestants, was indeed the dark barbarity that was over the world in the centuries immediately preceding the reformation; the knowledge of the tongues being about that time, until it was even then restored by Erasmus and some others, almost lost and extinct. And this barbarity was so much the more abominable, that the whole worship and prayers of the people were in the Latin tongue; and among that vast number of priests, monks, and friars, scarce one of a thousand understood his breviary, or that mass which he daily read and repeated: the scripture being, not only to the people, but to the greater part of the clergy, even as to the literal knowledge of it, as a sealed book. I shall not at all discommend the zeal that the first reformers had against this Babylonish darkness, nor their pious endeavors to translate the holy scriptures: I do truly believe, according to their knowledge, that they did it candidly: and therefore to answer the just desires of those that desire to read them, and for other very good reasons, as maintaining a commerce and understanding among divers nations by these common languages, and others of that kind, we judge it necessary and commendable that there be public schools for the teaching and instructing such youth, as are inclinable thereunto, in the languages.

But all this will not make it a necessary qualification to a minister, far less a more necessary qualification than the grace of God and his Spirit; because the Spirit and grace of God can make up this want in the most rustic and ignorant; but this knowledge can no ways make up the want of the Spirit in the most learned and eloquent. For all that

Digitized by Google

which man by his own industry, learning and knowledge in the languages, can interpret of the scriptures, or find out, is nothing without the Spirit; he cannot be certain, but may still miss of the sense of it: whereas a poor man, that knoweth not a letter, when he heareth the scriptures read, by the same Spirit he can say, This is true; and by the same Spirit he can understand, open, and interpret it, if need be: yea, finding his condition to answer the condition and experience of the saints of old, he knoweth and possesseth the truths there delivered, because they are sealed and witnessed in his own heart by the same Spirit. And this we have plentiful experience of in many of those illiterate men, whom God hath raised up to be ministers in his church in this day; so that some such, by his Spirit, have corrected some of the errors of the translators. I know myself a poor shoemaker, that cannot read a word, who being assaulted with a false citation of scripture, from a public professor of divinity, before the magistrate of a city, when he had been taken up for preaching to some few that came to hear him; I say, I know such a one, and he is yet alive, who though the professor, who also is esteemed a learned man, constantly asserted his saying to be a scripture sentence, yet the poor man affirmed, not through any certain letter-knowledge he had of it, but from the most certain evidence of the Spirit in himself, that the professor was mistaken; and that the Spirit of God never said any such thing as the other affirmed: and the Bible being brought, it was found as the poor shoemaker had said.

THE SECOND PART of their literature is logic and philosophy,

Digitized by Google

an art so little needful to a true minister, that if one that comes to be a true minister hath had it, it is safest for him to forget and lose it; for it is the root and ground of all contention and debate, and the way to make a thing a great deal darker, than clearer: yea, it often hinders man from a clear understanding of things that his own reason would give him.

If it be urged, That thereby the truth may be maintained and confirmed, and heretics confuted; I answer, The truth, in men truly rational, needeth not the help thereof; and such as are obstinate, this will not convince; for by this they may learn twenty tricks and distinctions, how to shut out the truth: and the truth proceeding from an honest heart, and spoken forth from the virtue and Spirit of God, will have more influence, and take sooner and more effectually, than by a thousand demonstrations of logic; as that heathen philosopher acknowledged, who, disputing with the Christian bishops in the council of Nice, was so subtle, that he could not be overcome by them; but yet by a few words spoken by a simple old rustic, was presently convinced and converted to the Christian faith; and being enquired how he came to yield to that ignorant old man, and not to the bishops; he said, That they contended with him in his own way, and he could still give words for words; but there came from the old man that virtue, which he was not able to resist. This secret virtue and power ought to be the logic and philosophy wherewith a true Christian minister should be furnished; and for which they need not be beholden to Aristotle. As to natural logic, by which

Digitized by Google

rational men, without that art and rules, or sophistical learning, deduce a certain conclusion out of true propositions, which scarce any man of reason wants, we deny not the use of it; and I have sometimes used it in this treatise.

THE MAIN part of their literature is school-divinity, which is man in his first, fallen, natural state, pleasing himself with some notions of truth, and adorning them with his own sensual and carnal wisdom, because he thinks the simplicity of the truth too low and mean a thing for him; multiplying a thousand difficult and needless questions, and endless contentions and debates. All which, he who perfectly knoweth, is so much the farther from receiving, understanding, or learning the truth, as it is in its own naked simplicity; because he is full, learned, rich, and wise in his own conceit. The volumes that have been written about it, a man in his whole age could scarce read, though he lived to be very old; and when he has read them all, he has but wrought himself a great deal more vexation and trouble of spirit than he had before.

They make the scripture the text of all this mass; and it is concerning the sense of it that their voluminous debates arise. But a man of a good upright heart may learn more in half an hour, and be more certain of it, by waiting upon God, and his Spirit in the heart, than by reading a thousand of their volumes; which by filling his head with many needless imaginations, may well stagger his faith, but never confirm it: and indeed those that give themselves most to it, are most capable to fall into error, as appeareth

Digitized by Google

by the example of Origen, who, by his learning, was one of the first, that falling into this way of interpreting the scriptures, wrote so many volumes, and in them so many errors, as very much troubled the church. Also Arius, led by this curiosity and human scrutiny, despising the simplicity of the gospel, fell into his error, which was the cause of that horrible heresy which so much troubled the church. Methinks the simplicity, plainness, and brevity of the scriptures themselves, should be a sufficient reproof for such a science; and the apostles, being honest, plain, illiterate men, may be better understood by such kind of men now, than with all that mass of scholastic stuff, which neither Peter, nor Paul, nor John, ever thought of.

Now, THOUGH THE grossest of these abuses be swept away by Protestants; yet the evil root still remains, and is nourished and upheld; and the science kept up, as being deemed necessary for a minister; while the pure learning of the Spirit of truth is despised and neglected. And so he that is to be a minister, must learn this art, that he may from a verse of scripture, by adding his own conceptions to it, each Sabbath-day, as they call it, or oftener, make a discourse for an hour long; and this is called the preaching of the word: whereas the gift, grace, and Spirit of God, to teach, open, and instruct, and to preach a word in season, is neglected. But what availeth all this? Is it not all but as death, without the power, life and spirit of Christianity, which is the marrow and substance of a Christian ministry? And he that hath this, and can speak from it, though he be a poor shepherd, or a fisherman, and ignorant of all that

Digitized by Google

learning, and of all those questions and notions; yet speaking from the Spirit, his ministry will have more influence towards the converting of a sinner unto God, than all of them who are learned after the flesh.

And if in any age, since the apostles' days, God hath purposed to show his power by weak instruments, for the battering down of carnal wisdom, and restoring again the ancient simplicity of truth, this is it. For in our day, God hath raised up witnesses for himself, as he did fishermen of old; many, yea, most of whom, are laboring and mechanic men, who, altogether without that learning, have, by the power and Spirit of God, struck at the very root and ground of Babylon; and in the strength and might of this power, have gathered thousands, by reaching their consciences, into the same power and life, who, as to the outward part, have been far more knowing than they, yet not able to resist the virtue that proceeded from them. Of which I myself am a true witness; and can declare from certain experience, because my heart hath been often greatly broken and tendered by that virtuous life that proceeded from the powerful ministry of those illiterate men; so that by their very countenance, as well as words, I have felt the evil in me often chained down, and the good reached to and raised. What shall I then say to you, who are lovers of learning, and admirers of knowledge? Was not I also a lover and admirer of it, who also sought after it, according to my age and capacity? But it pleased God, in his unutterable love, early to withstand my vain endeavors, while I was yet but eighteen years of age; and made me

Digitized by Google

seriously to consider, that without holiness and regeneration, no man can see God; and that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from iniquity, a good understanding; and how much knowledge puffeth up, and leadeth away from that inward quietness, stillness, and humility of mind, where the Lord appears, and his heavenly wisdom is revealed. If ye consider these things, then will ye say with me, that all this learning, wisdom, and knowledge, gathered in this fallen nature, is but as dross, in comparison of the cross of Christ; especially being destitute of that power, life, and virtue, which I perceived these despised (because illiterate) witnesses of God to be filled with: and therefore seeing, that in and among them, I, with many others, have found the heavenly food that gives contentment, let my soul seek after this learning, and wait for it for ever.

HAVING THUS spoken of the call and qualifications of a gospel-minister, that which comes next to be considered, is, What his proper work is, how, and by what rule, he is to be ordered? We walk still upon the same foundation, and lean always upon the immediate assistance and influence of that Holy Spirit, which God hath given his children, to teach them all things, and lead them in all things: which Spirit, being the Spirit of order, and not of confusion, leads us, and as many as follow it, into such a comely and decent order as becometh the church of God. In a true church of Christ, gathered together by God, not only into the belief of the principles of truth, but also into the power, life, and Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God is the orderer, ruler,

Digitized by Google

and governor; as in each particular, so in the general. And when they assemble together to wait upon God, and to worship and adore him; then such as the Spirit sets apart for the ministry, by its divine power and influence opening their mouths, and giving them to exhort, reprove, and instruct with virtue and power; these are thus ordained of God and admitted into the ministry, and their brethren cannot but hear them, receive them, and also honor them, for their work's sake. And so this is not monopolized by a certain kind of men, as the clergy (who are to that purpose educated and brought up), and the rest to be despised as laics; but it is left to the free gift of God to choose any whom he seeth meet thereunto, whether rich or poor, servant or master, young or old, yea, male or female.

But if it be objected here, That I seem hereby to make no distinction at all betwixt ministers and others; which is contrary to the apostle's saying, 1 Cor. xii. 29, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" Also that the apostle not only distinguisheth the ministers of the church in general from the rest of the members, but also from themselves; as naming them distinctly and separately, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc.

I answer; It is apparent, that this diversity of names is not to distinguish separate offices, but to denote the different and various operations of the Spirit; a manner of speech frequent with the apostle Paul, wherein he sometimes expatiates to the illustrating of the glory and praise of God's grace: as in particular, Rom. xii. 6: Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given us, whether

Digitized by Google

prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." Now none will say from all this, that these are distinct offices, or do not or may not coincide in one person, as may all those other things mentioned by him in the subsequent verses, viz., Of loving, being kindly affectioned, fervency of spirit, hospitality, diligence, blessing, rejoicing, etc., which he yet numbers forth as different gifts of the Spirit, and according to this objection might be placed as distinct and separate offices.

In these very places mentioned it is clear that it is no real distinction of separate offices; because all acknowledge, that pastors and teachers are one and the same, and coincide in the same office and person; and therefore may be said so of the rest. For prophecy as it signifies the foretelling of things to come, is indeed a distinct gift, but no distinct office; and it both may be and hath been given of God to some, that not only have been pastors and teachers, but also to some of the laics. Prophecy in the other sense, to wit, as it signifies a speaking from the Spirit of truth, is not peculiar only to pastors and teachers, who ought so to prophesy; but even a common privilege to the saints. That prophesying, in this sense, may be common to all saints, appears by verse 39, of the same chapter, where the apostle speaking to *all* in general, saith, "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy;" and verse 1, he exhorts them saying, "Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy."

As to evangelists the same may be said for whoever

Digitized by Google

preacheth the gospel is really an evangelist, and so consequently every true minister of the gospel is one; else what proper office can they assign to it, unless they should affirm that none were evangelists but Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who wrote the account of Christ's life and sufferings? and then it were neither a particular office, seeing John and Matthew were apostles, Mark and Luke pastors and teachers, so that there they coincided in one. And indeed it is absurd to think, that upon that particular account the apostle used the word *evangelists*. Calvin acknowledgeth, that such as preach the gospel in purity, after some time of apostasy, may be truly called evangelist, and therefore saith, that there were apostles in his time; and hence the Protestants at their first coming forth, termed themselves *evangelici*, or evangelics.

Lastly, an *apostle*, if we look to the etymology of the word, signifies *one that is sent;* and in respect every true minister is sent of God, in so far he is an apostle; though the twelve, because of their being specially sent of Christ, were therefore called apostles by way of excellency. And yet that there was no limitation to such a number appears, because after that number was filled up, the apostle Paul was afterwards so called; therefore we judge that these are no distinct separate offices, but only names used upon occasion to express the more eminent arising and shining forth of God's grace. As if any minister of Christ should now proselyte and turn a whole nation to the Christian faith, though he had no distinct office, yet I doubt not but both Papists and Protestants would judge it tolerable to call

Digitized by Google

such an one an apostle, or an evangelist; for on this account the Jesuits call some of their sect apostles of India and of Japan; and Calvin testifies that there were apostles and evangelists in his time, in respect to the reformation; upon which account also we have known John Knox often called the apostle of Scotland. So that we conclude that ministers, pastors, or teachers do comprehend all, and that the office is but one, and therefore in that respect we judge there ought to be no precedency among them.

IF I SEEM TO MAKE no distinction betwixt the minister and people, I answer, If it be understood of a liberty to speak or prophesy by the Spirit, I say all may do that, when moved thereunto, as above is shown; but we do believe and affirm that some are more particularly called to the work of the ministry, and therefore are fitted of the Lord for that purpose; whose work is more constantly and particularly to instruct, exhort, admonish, oversee, and watch over their brethren; and that as there is something more incumbent upon them in that respect than upon every common believer, so also, as in that relation, there is due to them from the flock such obedience and subjection as is mentioned in these testimonies of the scripture, Heb. xiii. 17; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Tim. v. 17; 1 Pet. v. 5. Also besides these who are thus particularly called to the ministry and constant labor in the word and doctrine, there are also the elders, who though they be not moved to a frequent testimony by way of declaration in words, yet as such are grown up in the experience of the blessed work of truth in their hearts, they watch over and privately admonish the

Digitized by Google

young, take care for the widows, the poor, and fatherless, and look that nothing be wanting, but that peace, love, unity, concord, and soundness be preserved in the church of Christ; and this answers to the deacons mentioned Acts vi.

That which we oppose, is the distinction of laity and clergy, which in the scripture is not to be found, whereby none are admitted unto the work of the ministry but such as are educated at schools on purpose. And so he that is a scholar thus bred up must not have any honest trade whereby to get him a livelihood, if he once intend for the ministry, but he must see to get him a place, and then he hath his set hire for a livelihood to him. He must also be distinguished from the rest by the color of his clothes; for he must only wear black, and must be a master of arts.

As THIS MANNER of separating men for the ministry is nothing like the church in the apostles' days, so great evils have and do follow upon it. For first, Parents seeing both the honor and profit that attends the clergy, do allot their children sometimes from their infancy to it, and so breed them up on purpose. And others, come to age, upon the same account betake them to the same trade, and having these natural and acquired parts that are judged the necessary qualifications of a minister, are thereby admitted, and so are bred up in idleness and pleasure, thinking it a disgrace for them to work with their hands; and so just study a little out of their books, to make a discourse once or twice a week during the running of an hour-glass, whereas the gift, grace, and Spirit of God, to call and qualify for the

Digitized by Google

ministry, is neglected and overlooked. And many covetous, corrupt, earthly, carnal men, having a mere show and form, but strangers to, and utterly ignorant of, the inward work of grace upon their hearts, are brought in and intrude themselves, and so through them death, barrenness, and darkness, and by consequence, superstition, error, and idolatry have entered and leavened the church. And they that will narrowly observe, shall find that it was thus the apostasy came to take place.

From this distinction of laity and clergy this abuse also follows, that good, honest, mechanic men, and others who have not learned the art and trade of preaching, and so are not licentiated according to these rules they prescribe unto themselves; such, I say, being possessed with a false opinion that it is not lawful for them to meddle with the ministry, nor that they are any ways fit for it, because of the defect of that literature, do thereby neglect the gift in themselves, and quench many times the pure breathings of the Spirit of God in their hearts; which, if given way to, might prove much more for the edification of the church than many of the conned sermons of the learned. And all this is done by men pretending to be Christians, who glory that the first preachers and propagators of their religion were such kind of plain mechanic men, and illiterate. And even Protestants do no less than Papists exclude such kind of men from being ministers among them, and thus limit the Spirit and gift of God; though their own histories declare how that kind of illiterate men did, without learning,

Digitized by Google

by the Spirit of God, greatly contribute in divers places to the Reformation.

THE LAST THING to be considered is, concerning the maintenance of a gospel minister; but before I proceed, I judge it fit to speak something in short concerning the preaching of women. Seeing male and female are one in Christ Jesus, and that he gives his Spirit no less to one than to the other, when God moveth by his Spirit in a woman, we judge it no ways unlawful for her to preach in the assemblies of God's people. Neither think we that of Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, to reprove the inconsiderate and talkative women among the Corinthians, who troubled the church of Christ with their unprofitable questions, or that, 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12, that "women ought to learn in silence, not usurping authority over the man," any ways repugnant to this doctrine; because it is clear that women have prophesied and preached in the church, else had that saying of Joel been ill applied by Peter, Acts ii. 17. "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy." And seeing Paul himself, in the same epistle to the Corinthians, giveth rules how women should behave themselves in their public preaching and praying, it would be a manifest contradiction, if that other place were taken in a larger sense. And the same Paul speaks of a woman that labored with him in the work of the gospel: and it is written that Philip had four daughters that prophesied. And lastly, It hath been observed, that God hath effectually in this day converted many souls by the ministry of women; and by them

Digitized by Google

also frequently comforted the souls of his children; which manifest experience puts the thing beyond all controversy.

Concerning the maintenance of ministers, we freely acknowledge, as the proposition holds forth, that there is an obligation upon such to whom God sends, or among whom he raiseth up a minister, that, if need be, they minister to his necessities, and that it is lawful for him to receive what is necessary and convenient. But Christ when he sent forth his apostles, said, "Freely ye have received, freely give," Matt. x. 8, and yet they had liberty to receive meat and drink from such as offered them, to supply their need. Which shows that they were not to seek or require anything by force, or make a bargain beforehand, as the preachers as well among Papists as Protestants do in these days, who will not preach to any until they be first sure of so much a year; but on the contrary, these were to do their duty, and freely to communicate as the Lord should order them, what they had received, without seeking or expecting a reward.

The scripture testimonies that urge this are in the same nature as those that press charity and liberality towards the poor, and command hospitality, etc., but these are not nor can be stinted to a certain quantity, because they are deeds merely voluntary, where the obedience to the command lieth in the good will of the giver, and not in the matter of the thing given, as Christ showeth in the example of the widow's mite. So that though there be an obligation upon Christians to minister of outward things to their ministers, yet there can be no definition of the quan-

Digitized by Google

tity but by the giver's own consent, and a little from one may more truly fulfil the obligation than a great deal from another.

But it is usually objected, That Christians are become so hard-hearted, and generally so little heed spiritual things, that if ministers had not a settled maintenance secured them, they and their families might starve for want of bread.

This objection might have some weight as to a carnal ministry, made up of natural men, who have no life, power, nor virtue with them, and so may insinuate some need of such a maintenance for such a ministry; but it saith nothing as to such as are called and sent of God, who sends no man a wayfaring upon his own charges; and so go forth in the authority and power of God, to turn people from darkness to light; for such can trust to him that sendeth them, and do believe that he will provide for them, knowing that he requireth nothing of any but what he giveth power to perform; and so when they return, if he inquire, can say they wanted nothing. And such also when they stay in a place, being immediately furnished by God, and not needing to borrow what they preach from books, and take up their time that way, fall a working at their lawful employments and labor with their hands, as Paul did when he gathered the church at Corinth. And indeed if this objection had any weight, the apostles and primitive pastors should never have gone forth to convert the nations, for fear of want. Doth not the doctrine of Christ teach us to venture all, and part with all, to serve God? Can they then be accounted ministers of Christ

Digitized by Google

who are afraid to preach him lest they get not money for it, or will not do it until they be sure of their payment? What serves the ministry for but to perfect the saints, and so to convert them from that hard-heartedness?

But by keeping up of this kind of maintenance for the ministry and clergymen, so called, there is a first bait laid for covetousness, which is idolatry, and of all things most hurtful; so that for covetousness' sake, many, being led by the desire of filthy lucre, do apply themselves to be ministers, that they may get a livelihood by it. The scandal that by these means is raised among Christians is manifest. For though they pretend, at their accepting of and entering into their church, that they have nothing before them but the glory of God and the salvation of souls; yet if a richer benefice offer itself, they presently find it more for God's glory to remove from the first, and go thither. And thus they make no difficulty often to change, while notwithstanding they accuse us that we allow ministers to go from place to place, and not to be tied to one place; but we allow this not for the gaining of money, but as moved of God. For if a minister be called to minister in a particular place, he ought not to leave it, except God call him from it, and then he ought to obey: for we make the will of God inwardly revealed, and not the love of money and more gain, the ground of removing.

THE SUM THEN OF what is said is, That the ministry that we have pleaded for, and which also the Lord hath raised up among us is, in all its parts, like the true ministry of the apostles and primitive church.

Digitized by Google

The ministers we plead for, are such as are immediately called and sent forth by Christ and his Spirit; are actuated and led by God's Spirit, and by the power and operation of his grace in their hearts, are in some measure converted and regenerate, and so are good, holy, and gracious men; such as labor in the work of the ministry, not from their own mere natural strength and ability, but as they are moved, assisted, and influenced by the Spirit of God, and minister according to the gift received; such as, being holy and humble, contend not for precedency and priority, but rather strive to prefer one another, and serve one another in love, neither desire to be distinguished from the rest, nor yet to be called of men master; such as having freely received, freely give; who seek no man's goods, but seek them, and the salvation of their souls; whose hands supply their own necessities, working honestly for bread to themselves and their families: and if at any time they be called of God, so as the work of the Lord hinder them from the use of their trades, take what is freely given them by such to whom they have communicated spirituals; and having food and raiment, are therewith content. Such were the holy prophets and apostles.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION XI.

CONCERNING WORSHIP.

ALL true and acceptable worship to God is offered in the inward and immediate moving and drawing of his own Spirit, which is neither limited to places, times, nor persons. For though we are to worship him always, and continually to fear before him; yet as to the outward signification thereof, in prayers, praises, or preachings, we ought not to do it in our own will, where and when we will; but where and when we are moved thereunto by the stirring and secret inspiration of the Spirit of God in our hearts; which God heareth and accepteth of, and is never wanting to move us thereunto, when need is; of which he himself is the alone proper judge. All other worship then, both praises, prayers, or preachings, which man sets about in his own will, and at his own appointment, which he can both begin and end at his pleasure, do or leave undone as himself seeth meet, whether they be a prescribed form, as a liturgy, etc., or prayers conceived extempore by the natural strength and faculty of the mind, they are all but superstition, will-worship, and abominable idolatry in the sight of God, which are now to be denied and rejected, and separated from, in this day of his spiritual arising: however it

Digitized by Google

might have pleased him (who winked at the times of ignorance with a respect to the simplicity and integrity of some, and of his own innocent seed, which lay as it were buried in the hearts of men under that mass of superstition) to blow upon the dead and dry bones, and to raise some breathings of his own, and answer them; and that until the day should more clearly dawn and break forth.

LET IT BE CONSIDERED, that what is here affirmed, is spoken of the worship of God in these gospel-times, and not of the worship that was under or before the law; for the particular commands of God to men then, are not sufficient to authorize us now to do the same things; else we might be supposed at present acceptably to offer sacrifice as they did, which all acknowledge to be ceased. So that what might have been both commendable and acceptable under the law, may justly now be charged with superstition.

Albeit I say, that this worship is neither limited to times, places, nor persons; yet I would not be understood, as if I intended the putting away of all set times and places to worship: God forbid I should think of such an opinion. Nay, we are none of those that forsake the assembling of ourselves together; but have certain times and places, in which we carefully meet together, nor can we be driven therefrom by the threats and persecutions of men, to wait upon God, and worship him. To meet together we think necessary for the people of God; because, so long as we are clothed with this outward tabernacle, there is a necessity

Digitized by Google

to the entertaining of a joint and visible fellowship, and bearing of an outward testimony for God, and seeing of the faces of one another, that we concur with our persons as well as spirits.

But the limitation we condemn, is, that whereas the Spirit of God should be the immediate mover and influencer of man in the particular acts of worship, when the saints are met together, this Spirit is limited in its operations by setting up a particular man or men to preach and pray in man's will; and all the rest are excluded from so much as believing that they are to wait for God's Spirit to move them in such things; and so they neglecting that in themselves which should quicken them, and not waiting to feel the pure breathings of God's Spirit, so as to obey them, are led merely to depend upon the preacher, and hear what he will say. These preachers thus set apart come not thither to meet with the Lord, and to wait for the inward motions and operations of his Spirit; and so to pray as they feel the Spirit to breathe through them, and in them; and to preach, as they find themselves moved by God's Spirit, and as he gives utterance, so as to speak a word in season to refresh weary souls, and as the present condition and state of the people's hearts require; suffering God by his Spirit both to prepare people's hearts, and also give the preacher to speak what may be fit and seasonable for them; but he [viz., the preacher] without waiting or feeling the inward influence of the Spirit of God, declaims what he has prepared, whether it be fit or seasonable for the people's con-

Digitized by Google

dition, or not; and when he has ended his sermon, he saith his prayer also in his own will.

WE ARE NOT AGAINST set times for worship: only these times being appointed for outward conveniency, we may not therefore think with the Papists, that these days are holy, and lead people into a superstitious observation of them; being persuaded that all days are alike holy in the sight of God. We, not seeing any ground in scripture for it, cannot be so superstitious as to believe that either the Jewish sabbath now continues, or that the first day of the week is the anti-type thereof, or the true Christian sabbath; which we believe to have a more spiritual sense: and therefore we know no moral obligation by the fourth command, or elsewhere, to keep the first day of the week more than any other, or any holiness inherent in it. But forasmuch as it is necessary that there be some time set apart for the saints to meet together to wait upon God; and that it is fit at some times they be freed from their other outward affairs; and that reason and equity doth allow that servants and beasts have some time allowed them to be eased from their continual labor; and that it appears that the apostles and primitive Christians did use the first day of the week for these purposes; we find ourselves sufficiently moved for these causes to do so also, without superstitiously straining the scriptures for another reason. And though we therefore meet, and abstain from working upon this day, yet doth not that hinder us from having meetings also for worship at other times.

THOUGH ACCORDING to the knowledge of God, revealed

Digitized by Google

unto us by the Spirit, through that more full dispensation of light which we believe the Lord hath brought about in this day, we judge it our duty to hold forth that pure and spiritual worship which is acceptable to God, and answerable to the testimony of Christ and his apostles, and likewise to testify against and deny not only manifest superstition and idolatry, but also all formal will worship, which stands not in the power of God; yet, I say, we do not deny the whole worship of all those that have borne the name of Christians even in the apostasy, as if God had never heard their prayers, nor accepted any of them: God forbid we should be so void of charity! The Popish mass and vespers I do believe to be, as to the matter of them, abominable idolatry and superstition, and so also believe the Protestants; yet will neither I nor they affirm, that in the darkness of Popery no upright-hearted men, though zealous in these abominations, have been heard of God, or accepted of him. Who can deny but that both Bernard and Bonaventure, Taulerus, Thomas à Kempis, and divers others have both known and tasted of the love of God, and felt the power and virtue of God's Spirit working with them for their salvation? And yet ought we not to forsake and deny those superstitions which they were found in? So likewise, though we should confess that through the mercy and wonderful condescension of God, there have been upright in heart both among Papists and Protestants, yet can we not therefore approve of their way in the general, or not go on to the upholding of that spiritual worship, which the Lord is calling all to, and so to the testifying against whatsoever stands in the way of it.

Digitized by Google

As to the public worship, we judge it the duty of all to be diligent in the assembling of themselves together, and, when assembled, the great work of one and all ought to be to wait upon God; and returning out of their own thoughts and imaginations, to feel the Lord's presence, and know a gathering into his name indeed, where he is in the midst, according to his promise. And as every one is thus gathered, and so met together inwardly in their spirits, as well as outwardly in their persons, there the secret power and virtue of life is known to refresh the soul, and the pure motions and breathings of God's Spirit are felt to arise; from which, as words of declaration, prayers or praises arise, the acceptable worship is known, which edifies the church, and is well-pleasing to God. And no man here limits the Spirit of God, nor bringeth forth his own conned and gathered matter; but every one puts that forth which the Lord puts into their hearts: and it is uttered forth not in man's will and wisdom; but in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. Yea, though there be not a word spoken, yet is the true spiritual worship performed, and the body of Christ edified; yea, it may, and hath often fallen out among us, that divers meetings have passed without one word; and yet our souls have been greatly edified and refreshed, and our hearts wonderfully overcome with the secret sense of God's power and Spirit, which without words hath been ministered from one vessel to another. This is indeed strange and incredible to the mere natural and carnally-minded man, who will be apt to judge all time lost where there is not something spoken that is obvious to the outward senses.

Digitized by Google

As there can be nothing more opposite to the natural will and wisdom of man than this silent waiting upon God, so neither can it be obtained, nor rightly comprehended by man, but as he layeth down his own wisdom and will, so as to be content to be thoroughly subject to God. And therefore it was not preached, nor can be so practised, but by such as find no outward ceremony, no observations, no words, yea, not the best and purest words, even the words of scripture, able to satisfy their weary and afflicted souls: because where all these may be, the life, power, and virtue, which make such things effectual, may be wanting. Such, I say, were necessitated to cease from all externals, and to be silent before the Lord; and being directed to that inward principle of life and light in themselves, as the most excellent teacher, which "can never be removed into a corner," came thereby Isa. xxx. 20. to be taught to wait upon God in the measure of life and grace received from him, and to cease from their own forward words and actings, in the natural willing and comprehension, and feel after this inward seed of life; that, as it moveth they may move with it, and be actuated by its power, and influenced, whether to pray, preach, or sing.

And so from this principle of man's being silent, and not acting in the things of God of himself, until thus actuated by God's light and grace in the heart, did naturally spring that manner of sitting silent together, and waiting together upon the Lord. For many thus principled, meeting together in the pure fear of the Lord, did not apply themselves presently to speak, pray, or sing, etc., being afraid

Digitized by Google

to be found acting forwardly in their own wills; but each made it their work to retire inwardly to the measure of grace in themselves, not being only silent as to words, but even abstaining from all their own thoughts, imaginations, and desires; so watching in a holy dependence upon the Lord, and meeting together not only outwardly in one place, but thus inwardly in one Spirit, and in one name of Jesus, which is his power and virtue, they come thereby to enjoy and feel the arisings of this life, which, as it prevails in each one, becomes as a flood of refreshment, and overspreads the whole meeting: for man, and man's part and wisdom, being denied and chained down in every individual, and God exalted, and his grace in dominion in the heart, thus his name comes to be one in all, and his glory breaks forth and covers all; and there is such a holy awe and reverence upon every soul, that if the natural part should arise in any, or the wise part, or what is not one with the life, it would presently be chained down, and judged out. And when any are, through the breaking forth of this power, constrained to utter a sentence of exhortation or praise, or to breathe to the Lord in prayer, then all are sensible of it; for the same life in them answers to it, "as in water face answereth to face."

Prov. xxvii. 19.

This is that divine and spiritual worship which the world neither knoweth nor understandeth, which the vulture's eye seeth not into. Yet many and great are the advantages, which my soul, with many others, hath tasted of hereby, and which would be found of all such as would

Digitized by Google

seriously apply themselves hereunto: for, when people are gathered thus together, not merely to hear men, nor depend upon them, but all are inwardly taught to stay their minds upon the Lord, and wait for his appearance in their hearts; thereby the forward working of the spirit of man is stayed and hindered from mixing itself with the worship of God; and the form of this worship is so naked and void of all outward and worldly splendor, that all occasion for man's wisdom to be exercised in that superstition and idolatry hath no lodging here; and so there being also an inward quietness and retiredness of mind, the witness of God ariseth in the heart, and the light of Christ shineth, whereby the soul cometh to see its own condition. And there being many joined together in this same work, there is an inward travail and wrestling; and also, as the measure of grace is abode in, an overcoming of the power and spirit of darkness; and thus we are often greatly strengthened and renewed in the spirits of our minds without a word, and we enjoy and possess the holy fellowship and communion of the body and blood of Christ, by which our inward man is nourished and fed; which makes us not to dote upon outward water, and bread and wine, in our spiritual things.

Isa. x. 20, & xxvi. 3.

Eph. iv. 23.

Now as many thus gathered together grow up in the strength, power, and virtue of truth, and as truth comes thus to have victory and dominion in their souls, then they receive an utterance, and speak steadily to the edification of their brethren, and the pure life hath a free passage through them, and what is thus spoken edifieth the body

Digitized by Google

indeed. Such is the evident certainty of that divine strength that is communicated by thus meeting together and waiting in silence upon God, that sometimes when one hath come in that hath been unwatchful and wandering in his mind, or suddenly out of the hurry of outward business, and so not inwardly gathered with the rest, so soon as he retires himself inwardly, this power being in a good measure raised in the whole meeting will suddenly lay hold upon his spirit, and wonderfully help to raise up the good in him and beget him into the sense of the same power, to the melting and warming of his heart; even as the warmth would take hold upon a man that is cold coming in to a stove, or as a flame will lay hold upon some little combustible matter being near unto it.

Yea, if it fall out that several met together be straying in their minds though outwardly silent, and so wandering from the measure of grace in themselves, which through the working of the enemy and negligence of some, may fall out; if either one come in, or may be in, who is watchful, and in whom the life is raised in a great measure, as that one keeps his place he will feel a secret travail for the rest in a sympathy with the seed which is oppressed in the other, and kept from arising by their thoughts and wanderings; and as such a faithful one waits in the light, and keeps in this divine work, God oftentimes answers the secret travail and breathings of his own seed through such a one, so that the rest will find themselves secretly smitten without words, and that one will through the secret travail of his soul bring forth the life in them, just as a little water

Digitized by Google

thrown into a pump brings up the rest, whereby life will come to be raised in all, and the vain imaginations brought down; and such a one is felt by the rest to minister life unto them without words.

Yea, sometimes, when there is not a word in the meeting, but all are silently waiting, if one come in that is rude and wicked, and in whom the power of darkness prevaileth much, perhaps with an intention to mock or do mischief, if the whole meeting be gathered into the life, and it be raised in a good measure, it will strike terror into such a one, and he will feel himself unable to resist; but by the secret strength and virtue thereof, the power of darkness in him will be chained down: and if the day of his visitation be not expired, it will reach to the measure of grace in him, and raise it up to the redeeming of his soul. And this we often bear witness of, so that we have had frequent occasion in this respect, since God hath gathered us to be a people, to renew this old saying of many, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" For not a few have come to be con- 1 Sam. x. 12. vinced of the truth after this manner, of which I myself, in part, am a true witness, who not by strength of arguments, or by a particular disquisition of each doctrine, and convincement of my understanding thereby, came to receive and bear witness of the truth, but by being secretly reached by this life; for when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart, and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me, and the good raised up, and so I became thus knit and united unto them, hungering more

Digitized by Google

and more after the increase of this power and life, whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed.

And indeed this is the surest way to become a Christian, to whom afterwards the knowledge and understanding of principles will not be wanting, but will grow up so much as is needful, as the natural fruit of this good root; and such a knowledge will not be barren or unfruitful. After this manner we desire therefore all that come among us to be proselyted, knowing that though thousands should be convinced in their understandings of all the truths we maintain, yet if they were not sensible of this inward life, and their souls not changed from unrighteousness to righteous-
1 Cor. vi. 17. ness, they could add nothing to us. For this is that cement whereby we are joined "as to the Lord," so to one another, and without this none can worship with us. Yea, if such should come among us, and from that understanding and convincement they have of the truth, speak ever so true things, and utter them forth with ever so much excellency of speech, if this life were wanting, it would not edify us at all, but be as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

As THIS WORSHIP is steadfastly preached and kept to, it becomes easy, though it be very hard at first to the natural man, whose roving imaginations and running worldly desires are not so easily brought to silence. And therefore the Lord oftentimes, when any turn towards him, and have true desires thus to wait upon him, and find great difficulty through the unstayedness of their minds, doth in condescension and compassion cause his power to break forth in a

Digitized by Google

more strong and powerful manner. And when the mind sinks down, and waits for the appearance of life, and the power of darkness in the soul wrestles and works against it, then the good seed, as it ariseth, will be found to work as physic in the soul, especially if such a weak one be in the assembly of divers others in whom the life is arisen in greater dominion, and through the contrary workings of the power of darkness there will be found an inward striving in the soul. And from this inward travail, while the darkness seeks to obscure the light, and the light breaks through the darkness, which it always will do if the soul gives not its strength to the darkness, there will be such a painful travail found in the soul, that it will even work upon the outward man, so that oftentimes, through the working thereof, the body will be greatly shaken, and groans, and sighs, and tears, will lay hold upon it; yea, and this not only as to one; but when the enemy hath prevailed in any measure in a whole meeting by drawing out the minds of such as are met from the life in them, as they come to be sensible of this power of his that works against them and to wrestle with it by the armor of light, sometimes the power of God will break forth into a whole meeting, and there will be such an inward travail while each is seeking to overcome the evil in themselves, that by the strong contrary workings of these opposite powers, like the going of two contrary tides, every individual will be strongly exercised as in a day of battle, and thereby trembling and a motion of body will be upon most, if not upon all; which, as the power of truth prevails, will from

Digitized by Google

pangs and groans end with a sweet sound of thanksgiving and praise. And from this the name of Quakers, i. e., Tremblers, was first reproachfully cast upon us; which, though it be none of our choosing, yet in this respect we are not ashamed of it, but have rather reason to rejoice therefore, even that we are sensible of this power that hath oftentimes laid hold of our adversaries, and made them yield unto us, and join with us, and confess to the truth, before they had any distinct knowledge of our doctrines, so that sometimes many at one meeting have been thus convinced: and this power would sometimes also reach to and wonderfully work even in little children, to the admiration and astonishment of many.

MANY ARE THE blessed experiences which I could relate of this silence and manner of worship; yet I do not so much commend and speak of silence as if we had bound ourselves by any law to exclude praying or preaching, or tied ourselves thereunto; not at all: for as our worship consisteth not in words, so neither in silence, as silence; but in a holy dependence of the mind upon God: from which dependence silence necessarily follows in the first place, until words can be brought forth, which are from God's Spirit. And God is not wanting to move in his children to bring forth words of exhortation or prayer, when it is needful; so that of the many gatherings and meetings of such as are convinced of the truth, there is scarce any in whom God raiseth not up some or other to minister to his brethren; and there are few meetings that are altogether silent.

Yet we judge it needful there be in the first place some

Digitized by Google

time of silence, during which every one may be gathered inward to the word and gift of grace; and we doubt not, but assuredly know that the meeting may be good and refreshful, though from the sitting down to the rising up thereof there hath not been a word outwardly spoken: there being no absolute necessity laid upon any so to do, all have chosen rather quietly and silently to possess and enjoy the Lord in themselves, which is very sweet and comfortable to the soul that hath thus learned to be gathered out of all its own thoughts and workings, to feel the Lord to bring forth both the will and the deed; which many can declare by a blessed experience.

THAT TO WAIT UPON God, and to watch before him, is a duty incumbent upon all, I suppose none will deny; and that this also is a part of worship will not be called in question, since there is scarce any other so frequently commanded in the holy scriptures, as may appear from Psalm xxvii. 14, and xxxvii. 7, 34; Prov. xx. 22; Isai. xxx. 18; Hosea xii. 6; Zeph. iii. 8; Matt. xxiv. 42, and xxv. 13, and xxvi. 41; Mark xiii. 33, 35, 37; Luke xxi. 36; Acts i. 4, and xx. 31; 1 Cor. xvi. 13; Col. iv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 7. Also this duty is often recommended with very great and precious promises, as Psalm xxv. 3, and xxxvii. 9, and lxix. 6; Isai. xlii. 23; Lam. iii. 25, 26. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, etc., Isa. xl. 31. Now how is this waiting upon God, or watching before him, but by this silence of which we have spoken?

The time appointed of God being come wherein by Jesus Christ he hath been pleased to restore the true spiritual

Digitized by Google

worship, and the outward form of worship which was appointed by God to the Jews, and whereof the manner and time of its performance was particularly determined by God himself, being come to an end, we find that Jesus Christ, the author of the Christian religion, prescribes no set form of worship to his children under the more pure administration of the new covenant, save that he only tells them, that the worship now to be performed is spiritual, and in the Spirit. And it is especially to be observed, that in the whole New Testament there is no order nor command given in this thing, but to follow the revelation of the Spirit, save only that general one of meeting together; a thing dearly owned and diligently practised by us, as shall hereafter more appear. True it is, mention is made of the duties of praying, preaching, and singing; but what order or method should be kept in so doing, or that presently they should be set about so soon as the saints are gathered, there is not one word to be found: yea, these duties, as shall afterwards be made appear, are always annexed to the assistance, leadings, and motions of God's Spirit. Since then man in his natural state is thus excluded from acting or moving in things spiritual, how or what way shall he exercise this first and previous duty of waiting upon God but by silence, and by bringing that natural part to silence? Which is no other ways but by abstaining from his own thoughts and imaginations, and from all the self-workings and motions of his own mind, as well in things materially good as evil; that he being silent, God may speak in him, and the good seed may arise. If the soul be still thinking and working

Digitized by Google

in her own will, and busily exercised in her own imaginations, though the matters as in themselves may be good concerning God, yet thereby she incapacitates herself from discerning the still, small voice of the Spirit, and so hurts herself greatly, in that she neglects her chief business of waiting upon the Lord.

And since it is the chief work of a Christian to know the natural will in its own proper motions crucified, that God may both move in the act and in the will, the Lord chiefly regards this profound subjection and self-denial. For some men please themselves as much, and gratify their own sensual wills and humors in high and curious speculations of religion, affecting a name and reputation that way, or because those things by custom or otherways are become pleasant and habitual to them, though not a whit more regenerated or inwardly sanctified in their spirits, as others gratify their lusts in acts of sensuality, and therefore both are alike hurtful to men, and sinful in the sight of God, it being nothing but the mere fruit and effect of man's natural and unrenewed will and spirit. Yea, should one, as many no doubt do, from a sense of sin and fear of punishment, seek to terrify themselves from sin by multiplying thoughts of death, hell, and judgment, and by presenting to their imaginations the happiness and joys of heaven, and also by multiplying prayers and other religious performances; as these things could never deliver him from one iniquity, without the secret and inward power of God's Spirit and grace, so would they signify no more than the fig-leaves wherewith Adam thought to cover his nakedness.

Digitized by Google

This great duty then of waiting upon God, must needs be exercised in man's denying self, both inwardly and outwardly, in a still and mere dependence upon God, in abstracting from all the workings, imaginations, and speculations of his own mind; that, being emptied as it were of himself, he may be fit to receive the Lord, who will have no co-partner nor co-rival of his glory and power. And so man's place is to wait in this; and as hereby there are any objects presented to his mind concerning God, or things relating to religion, his soul may be exercised in them without hurt, and to the great profit both of himself and others; because those things have their rise not from his own will, but from God's Spirit: and therefore as in the arisings and movings of this, his mind is still to be exercised in thinking and meditating, so also in the more obvious acts of preaching and praying. And so it may hence appear we are not against meditation, as some have sought falsely to infer from our doctrine; but we are against the thoughts and imaginations of the natural man in his own will, from which all errors and heresies concerning the Christian religion in the whole world have proceeded. But if it please God at any time, when one or more are waiting upon him, not to present such objects as give them occasion to exercise their minds in thoughts and imaginations, but purely to keep them in this holy dependence, and as they persist therein, to cause his secret refreshment and the pure incomes of his holy life to flow in upon them, then they have good reason to be content, because by this, as we know by good and blessed experience, the soul is more strengthened,

Digitized by Google

renewed, and confirmed in the love of God, and armed against the power of sin, than any way else; this being a foretaste of that real and sensible enjoyment of God, which the saints in heaven daily possess, which God frequently affords to his children here for their comfort and encouragement, especially when they are assembled together to wait upon him.

THE EXCELLENCY of this silent waiting upon God doth appear, in that it is impossible for the enemy, viz., the devil, to counterfeit it, so as for any soul to be deceived or deluded by him in the exercise thereof. He well knoweth that so long as self bears rule, and the Spirit of God is not the principal and chief actor, man is not put out of his reach; so therefore he can accompany the priest to the altar, the preacher to the pulpit, the zealot to his prayers, yea, the doctor and professor of divinity to his study, and there he can cheerfully suffer him to labor and work among his books, yea, and help him to find out and invent subtile distinctions and quiddities, by which both his mind and others through him, may be kept from heeding God's Light in the conscience, and waiting upon him. There is not any exercise whatsoever, wherein he cannot enter and have a chief place, so as the soul many times cannot discern it, except in this alone: for he can only work in and by the natural man, and when the natural man is silent, there he must also stand. And therefore when the soul comes to this silence, then the devil is shut out; for the pure presence of God and shining of his Light he cannot abide. When we retire out of all, and are turned in, both by being

Digitized by Google

diligent and watchful upon the one hand, and also silent and retired out of all our thoughts upon the other, as we abide in this sure place, we feel ourselves out of his reach.

THE NATURE OF THIS worship, which is performed by the operation of the Spirit, the natural man being silent, doth appear from these words of Christ, John iv. 23, 24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth." He hath instituted an inward and spiritual worship: so that God now tieth not his people to the temple of Jerusalem, nor yet unto outward ceremonies and observations; but taketh the heart of every Christian for a temple to dwell in; and there immediately appeareth, and giveth him directions how to serve him in any outward acts. Since, as Christ argueth, God is a Spirit, he will now be worshipped in the Spirit, where he reveals himself, and dwelleth with the contrite in heart. Before God be worshipped in the inward temple of the heart, it must be purged of its own filth, and all its own thoughts and imaginations, that so it may be fit to receive the Spirit of God, and to be actuated by it. And doth not this directly lead us to that inward silence, of which we have spoken, and exactly pointed out? And further, This worship must be in truth: intimating that this spiritual worship, thus acted, is only and properly a true worship; as being that which cannot be counterfeited by the enemy, nor yet performed by the hypocrite.

Digitized by Google

SOME OBJECT, if your worship merely consist in inwardly retiring to the Lord, and feeling of his Spirit arise in you, and then to do outward acts as ye are led by it, what need ye have public meetings at set times and places, since every one may enjoy this at home? Or should not every one stay at home, until they be particularly moved to go to such a place at such a time; since to meet at set times and places seems to be an outward observation and ceremony, contrary to what ye at other times assert?

I answer, first; Our meeting at set times and places is not a part of our worship, but a preparatory accommodation of our outward man, in order to a public visible worship; since we set not about the visible acts of worship when we meet together, until we be led thereunto by the Spirit of God. Secondly, God hath seen meet, so long as his children are in this world, to make use of the outward senses, not only as a means to convey spiritual life, as by speaking, praying, praising, etc., which cannot be done to mutual edification but when we hear and see one another; but also to entertain an outward, visible testimony for his name in the world: he causeth the inward life the more to abound when his children assemble themselves diligently together to wait upon him; so that as many candles lighted, and put in one place, do greatly augment the light, and make it more to shine forth, so when many are gathered together into the same life, there is more of the glory of God, and his power appears, to the refreshment of each individual; for that he partakes not only of the light and life raised in himself, but in all the rest. And therefore

Digitized by Google

Christ hath particularly promised a blessing to such as assemble together in his name, seeing he will be "in the midst of them." And therefore the Lord hath shown that he hath a particular respect to such as thus assemble themselves together, because that thereby a public testimony for him is upheld in the earth, and his name is thereby glorified; and therefore such as are right in their spirits, are naturally drawn to keep the meetings of God's people, and never want a spiritual influence to lead them thereunto; and if any do it in a mere customary way, they will no doubt suffer condemnation for it.

Some object, That this manner of worship in silence is not to be found in all the scripture:

I answer; We make not silence to be the sole matter of our worship; since, as I have said above, there are many meetings, which are seldom altogether silent; some or other are still moved either to preach, pray, or praise: and so in this our meetings cannot be but like the meetings of the primitive churches recorded in scripture, since our opposers confess that they did preach and pray by the Spirit. Seeing the scripture commands to meet together, and when met, the scripture prohibits prayers or preachings, but as the Spirit moveth thereunto; if people meet together, and the Spirit move not to such acts, it will necessarily follow that they must be silent.

THUS HAVING SHOWN the excellency of this worship, I shall add something more particularly of preaching, praying, and singing.

Preaching, as it is used both among Papists and Protes-

Digitized by Google

tants, is for one man to take some place or verse of scripture, and thereon speak for an hour or two, what he hath studied and premeditated in his closet, and gathered together from his own inventions, or from the writings and observations of others; and then he brings it forth, and repeats it before the people: and how much the more fertile and strong a man's invention is, and the more industrious and laborious he is in collecting such observations, and can utter them with the excellency of speech and human eloquence, so much the more is he accounted an able and excellent preacher.

To this we oppose, that when the saints are met together, and every one gathered to the gift and grace of God in themselves, he that ministereth, being actuated thereunto by the arising of the grace in himself, ought to speak forth what the Spirit of God furnisheth him with; not minding the eloquence and wisdom of words, but the demonstration of the Spirit and of power: and that either in the interpreting some part of scripture, in case the Spirit, which is the good remembrancer, lead him so to do, or otherwise words of exhortation, advice, reproof, and instruction, or the sense of some spiritual experiences: all which will still be agreeable to the scripture, though perhaps not founded upon any particular chapter or verse, as a text.

Franciscus Lambertus, speaketh well, "Beware that thou determine not precisely to speak what before thou hast meditated, whatsoever it be; for though it be lawful to determine the text which thou art to expound, yet not at all the interpre-

Digitized by Google

tation; lest if thou so dost, thou take from the Holy Spirit that which is his, to wit, to direct thy speech, that thou mayest prophesy in the name of the Lord, void of all learning, meditation, and experience, and as if thou hadst studied nothing at all; committing thy heart, thy tongue, and thyself wholly unto his Spirit, and trusting nothing to thy former studying or meditation; but saying with thyself, in great confidence of the divine promise, 'The Lord will give a word with much power unto those that preach the gospel.' But above all things be careful thou follow not the manner of hypocrites, who have written almost word for word what they are to say, and afterwards, when they are in the place of prophesying, pray the Lord to direct their tongue; but in the mean time, shutting up the way of the Holy Spirit, they determine to say nothing but what they have written. O unhappy kind of prophets, which depend not upon God's Spirit, but upon their own writings or meditation! Why prayest thou to the Lord, thou false prophet, to give thee his Holy Spirit by which thou mayest speak things profitable, and yet thou repellest the Spirit? Why preferrest thou thy meditation or study to the Spirit of God? Otherwise why committest thou not thyself to the Spirit?"

THIS MANNER OF preaching as used by them, considering that they also affirm that it may be and often is performed by men who are wicked, or void of true grace, cannot edify the church or beget or nourish true faith, but is destructive to it, being directly contrary to the nature of the Christian and apostolic ministry mentioned in the scrip-

Digitized by Google

tures: for the apostle preached the gospel "not in the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be of none effect," 1 Cor. i. 17. But this preaching not being done by the actings and movings of God's Spirit, but by man's invention and eloquence, in his own will, and through his natural and acquired parts and learning, is in the wisdom of words, and therefore the cross of Christ is thereby made of none effect. The apostle's speech and preaching was not "with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," that the faith of their hearers "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," 1 Cor. ii. 3, 4, 5. But this preaching having nothing of the Spirit and power in it, both the preachers and hearers confessing they wait for no such thing, nor yet are sometimes sensible of it, must needs stand in the enticing words of man's wisdom, since it is by the mere wisdom of man it is sought after, and the mere strength of man's eloquence and enticing words it is uttered; and therefore no wonder if the faith of such as hear and depend upon such preachers and preachings stand in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. The apostles declared, That they "spake not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," 1 Cor. ii. 13. But these preachers confess that they are strangers to the Holy Ghost, his motions and operations, neither do they wait to feel them, and therefore they speak in the words which their own natural wisdom and learning teach them.

Their way is contrary to the method and order of the

Digitized by Google

primitive church mentioned by the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 30, etc., where in preaching every one is to wait for his revelation, and to give place one unto another, according as things are revealed; but here there is no waiting for a revelation, but the preacher must speak, and not that which is revealed unto him, but what he hath prepared and premeditated beforehand.

But if any object after this manner, Have not many been benefited, yea, and both converted and edified by the ministry of such as have premeditated their preaching? Yea, and hath not the Spirit often concurred by its divine influence with preachings thus premeditated, so as they have been powerfully borne in upon the souls of the hearers to their advantage?

I answer, Though that be granted, which I shall not deny, it will not infer that the thing was good in itself, more than because Paul was met with by Christ to the converting of his soul riding to Damascus to persecute the saints, that he did well in so doing. But besides, it hath oftentimes fallen out, that God, having a regard to the simplicity and integrity either of the preacher or hearers, hath fallen in upon the heart of a preacher by his power and holy influence, and thereby hath led him to speak things that were not in his premeditated discourse, and which perhaps he never thought on before; and those passing ejaculations and unpremeditated but living exhortations, have proved more beneficial and refreshing both to preacher and hearers than all their premeditated sermons. But all that will not allow them to continue in these things which

Digitized by Google

in themselves are not approved, but contrary to the practice of the apostles, when God is raising up a people to serve him, according to the primitive purity and spirituality; yea, such acts of God's condescension, in times of darkness and ignorance, should engage all more and more to follow him, according as he reveals his most perfect and spiritual way.

CONCERNING PRAYER, let it be considered that it is twofold, inward and outward. Inward prayer is that secret turning of the mind towards God, whereby, being secretly touched and awakened by the light of Christ in the conscience, and so bowed down under the sense of its iniquities, unworthiness, and misery, it looks up to God, and joining with the secret shinings of the seed of God, it breathes towards him, and is constantly breathing forth some secret desires and aspirations towards him. It is in this sense that we are so frequently in scripture commanded to pray continually, Luke xviii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 17; Eph. vi. 18; Luke xxi. 36, which cannot be understood of outward prayer, because it were impossible that men should be always upon their knees, expressing words of prayer; and this would hinder them from the exercise of those duties no less positively commanded. Outward prayer is, when as the Spirit being thus in the exercise of inward retirement, and feeling the breathing of the Spirit of God to arise powerfully in the soul, receives strength and liberty by a superadded motion and influence of the Spirit to bring forth either audible sighs, groans, or words, and that either in public assemblies, or in private, or at meat, etc.

Digitized by Google

As then inward prayer is necessary at all times, so, so long as the day of every man's visitation lasteth, he never wants some influence less or more, for the practice of it; because he no sooner retires his mind, and considers himself in God's presence, but he finds himself in the practice of it.

The outward exercise of prayer, as needing a greater and superadded influence and motion of the Spirit, as it cannot be continually practised, so neither can it be so readily, so as to be effectually performed, until his mind be some time acquainted with the inward; therefore such as are diligent and watchful in their minds, and much retired in the exercise of this inward prayer, are more capable to be frequent in the use of the outward, because that this holy influence doth more constantly attend them; and they being better acquainted with, and accustomed to, the motions of God's Spirit, can easily perceive and discern them. And indeed, as such who are most diligent have a near access to God, and he taketh most delight to draw them by his Spirit to approach and call upon him, so when many are gathered together in this watchful mind, God doth frequently pour forth the Spirit of prayer among them and stir them thereunto, to the edifying and building up of one another in love.

But because this outward prayer depends upon the inward, as that which must follow it, and cannot be acceptably performed but as attended with a superadded influence and motion of the Spirit, therefore cannot we prefix set times to pray outwardly, so as to lay a necessity to speak words

Digitized by Google

at such and such times, whether we feel this heavenly influence and assistance or no; for that, we judge, were a tempting of God and a coming before him without due preparation. We think it fit for us to present ourselves before him by this inward retirement of the mind, and so to proceed further, as his Spirit shall help us and draw us thereunto; and we find that the Lord accepts of this, yea, and seeth meet sometimes to exercise us in this silent place for the trial of our patience, without allowing us to speak further, that he may teach us not to rely upon outward performances, or satisfy ourselves, as too many do, with the saying of our prayers; and that our dependence upon him may be the more firm and constant, to wait for the holding out of his sceptre, and for his allowance to draw near unto him, with greater freedom and enlargement of Spirit upon our hearts towards him. Yet nevertheless we do not deny but sometimes God, upon particular occasions, very suddenly, yea, upon the very first turning in of the mind, may give power and liberty to bring forth words or acts of outward prayer, so as the soul can scarce discern any previous motion: nevertheless that saying of Bernard is true, that all prayer is lukewarm, which hath not an inspiration preceding it.

Though we affirm that none ought to go about prayer without this motion, yet we do not deny but such sin as neglect prayer; but their sin is, in that they come not to that place where they may feel that which would lead them thereunto. And therefore we question not but many, through neglect of this inward watchfulness and retiredness of mind, miss many precious opportunities to pray,

Digitized by Google

and thereby are guilty in the sight of God; yet would they sin if they should set about the act until they first felt the influence. As one that is careless and otherways busied may miss to hear one speaking unto him, or even not hear the bell of a clock, though striking hard by him, so may many, through negligence, miss to hear God oftentimes calling upon them, and giving them access to pray unto him; yet will not that allow them, without his liberty, to pray in their own wills.

Though this be the only true and proper method of prayer, as that which is alone acceptable to God, yet shall we not deny but he oftentimes answered the prayers and concurred with the desires of some, especially in times of darkness, who have greatly erred herein; so that some that have sat down in formal prayer, though far wrong in the matter as well as manner, without the assistance or influence of God's Spirit, yet have found him to take occasion there-through to break in upon their souls, and wonderfully tender and refresh them; yet as in preaching and elsewhere hath afore been observed, that will not prove any such practices, or hinder any from coming to practise that pure, spiritual, and acceptable prayer, which God is again restoring and leading his people into, out of all superstitions and mere empty formalities.

THAT THERE IS A necessity of this inward retirement of the mind as previous to prayer, that the Spirit may be felt to draw thereunto, appears, for that in most of those places where prayer is commanded, watching is prefixed thereunto, as necessary to go before, as Matt. xxiv. 42; Mark xiii. 33

Digitized by Google

and xiv. 38; Luke xxi. 36, from which it is evident that this watching was to go before prayer. Now to what end is this watching, or what is it, but a waiting to feel God's Spirit to draw unto prayer, that so it may be done acceptably?

This necessity of the Spirit's moving and concurrence appears abundantly from that of the apostle Paul, Rom. viii. 26, 27: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

It appears also from Eph. vi. 18, and Jude 20, where the apostle commands "to pray always in the Spirit, and watching thereunto;" which is as much as if he had said, that we were never to pray without the Spirit, or watching thereunto. And Jude showeth that such prayers as are in the Holy Ghost only, tend to the building up of ourselves in our most holy faith.

The apostle Paul saith expressly, 1 Cor. xii. 3: "That no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost:" if then Jesus cannot be thus rightly named but by the Holy Ghost, far less can he be acceptably called upon.

The confidence that the saints have that God will hear them, is, if they "ask any thing according to his will," 1 John v. 14. So if the prayer be not according to his

Digitized by Google

will, there is no ground of confidence that he will hear. Now our opposers will acknowledge that prayers without the Spirit are not according to the will of God, and therefore such as pray without it have no ground to expect an answer: for indeed to desire a man to fall to prayer ere the Spirit in some measure less or more move him thereunto, is to desire a man to see before he opens his eyes, or to walk before he rises up, or to work with his hands before he moves them.

FROM THIS FALSE opinion of praying without the Spirit, and not judging it necessary to be waited for, as that which may be felt to move us thereunto, hath proceeded the superstition that is among those called Christians; so that many deceive themselves now, as the Jews did of old, thinking it sufficient if they pay their daily sacrifices, and offer their customary oblations; from thence thinking all is well, and creating a false peace to themselves, because they have offered up their sacrifices of morning and evening prayers. And therefore it is manifest that their constant use of these things doth not a whit influence their lives and conversations, but they remain for the most part as bad as ever. Yea, it is frequent both among Papists and Protestants, for them to leap as it were out of their vain, light, and profane conversations at their set hours and seasons, and fall to their customary devotion; and then, when it is scarce finished, and the words to God scarce out, the former profane talk comes after it. If there be any such thing as vain oblations, or prayers that are abomination, which God heareth not (as is certain there are, and the scripture testifies,

Digitized by Google

Isa. lxvi. 3; Jer. xiv. 12), certainly such prayers as are acted in man's will, and by his own strength, without God's Spirit, must be of that number.

Seeing then God hath called us to his spiritual worship, and to testify against the human and voluntary worships of the apostasy, if we did not stand immovable to the truth revealed, but should join with them, both our testimony for God would be weakened and lost, and it would be impossible steadily to propagate this worship in the world, whose progress we dare neither retard nor hinder by any act of ours; though therefore we shall lose not only worldly honor, but even our lives.

As to the singing of psalms, there will not be need of any long discourse; for that the case is just the same as in the two former of preaching and prayer. We confess this to be a part of God's worship, and very sweet and refreshing, when it proceeds from a true sense of God's love in the heart, and arises from the divine influence of the Spirit, which leads souls to breathe forth either a sweet harmony, or words suitable to the present condition; whether they be words formerly used by the saints, and recorded in scripture, such as the Psalms of David, or other words; as were the hymns and songs of Zacharias, Simeon, and the blessed Virgin Mary. But as for the formal customary way of singing, it hath no foundation in scripture, nor any ground in true Christianity: yea, besides all the abuses incident to prayer and preaching, it hath this more peculiar, that oftentimes great and horrid lies are said in the sight of God: for all manner of wicked profane people take upon them to

Digitized by Google

personate the experiences and conditions of blessed David; which are not only false, as to them, but also as to some of more sobriety, who utter them forth. Such singing doth more please the carnal ears of men, than the pure ears of the Lord, who abhors all lying and hypocrisy. That singing then that pleaseth him must proceed from that which is PURE in the heart, even from the Word of Life therein, in and by which, richly dwelling in us, spiritual songs and hymns are returned to the Lord, according to that of the apostle, Col. iii. 16. But as to artificial music, either by organs, or other instruments, or voice, we have neither example nor precept for it in the New Testament.

BUT LASTLY; The great advantage of this true worship of God, which we profess and practise, is, that it consisteth not in man's wisdom, arts, or industry; neither needeth the glory, pomp, riches, nor splendor of this world to beautify it, as being of a spiritual and heavenly nature; and therefore too simple and contemptible to the natural mind and will of man, that hath no delight to abide in it, because he finds no room there for his imaginations and inventions, and hath not the opportunity to gratify his outward and carnal senses: so that this form being observed, is not likely to be long kept pure without the power; for it is of itself so naked without it, that it hath nothing in it to invite and tempt men to dote upon it, further than it is accompanied with the power.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION XII.

CONCERNING BAPTISM.

AS there is one Lord, and one faith, so there is one baptism; which is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience before God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this baptism is a pure and spiritual thing, to wit, the baptism of the Spirit and fire, by which we are buried with him, that being washed and purged from our sins, we may walk in newness of life: of which the baptism of John was a figure, which was commanded for a time, and not to continue for ever. As to the baptism of infants, it is a mere human tradition, for which neither precept nor practice is to be found in all the scripture.

Eph. iv. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21. Rom. vi. 4. Gal. iii. 27. Col. ii. 12. John iii. 30. 1 Cor. i. 17.

GOD, IN CONDESCENSION to his chosen people the Jews, did prescribe to them by his servant Moses many ceremonies and observations, as types and shadows of the substance, which in due time was to be revealed; which consisted for the most part in washings, outward purifications and cleansings, which were to continue until the time of reformation, until the spiritual worship should be set up;

Digitized by Google

and that God, by the more plentiful pouring forth of his Spirit, and guiding of that anointing, should lead his children into all truth, and teach them to worship him in a way more spiritual and acceptable to him, though less agreeable to the carnal and outward senses. Notwithstanding God's condescension to the Jews in such things, we see that they would be either declining to the other superstitions of the Gentiles, or adding some new ceremonies of their own; to which they were so devoted, that they were still apt to prefer them before the commands of God, and that under the notion of zeal and piety. This we see abundantly in the example of the Pharisees, the chiefest sect among the Jews, whom Christ so frequently reproves for making void the commandments of God by their traditions. Matt. xv. 6, 9, etc. This complaint may at this day be no less justly made as to many bearing the name of Christians, who have introduced many things of this kind, partly borrowed from the Jews, which they more earnestly contend for, than for the weightier points of Christianity.

THIS IS VERIFIED concerning those things which are called sacraments, about which they are very ignorant in religious controversies, who understand not how much debate and contention there has been among those called Christians. The name *sacrament* however is not to be found in all the scripture; but was borrowed from the military oaths among the heathen, from whom the Christians, when they began to apostatize, did borrow many superstitious terms and observations, that they might thereby ingratiate themselves, and the more easily gain the heathen to their religion;

Digitized by Google

which practice, though perhaps intended by them for good, yet, as being the fruit of human policy, and not according to God's wisdom, has had very pernicious consequences.

OF THESE SACRAMENTS (so called) baptism is always first numbered, which is the subject of the present proposition. As to which these things following come to be proposed and proved.

First: There is but one baptism, as well as but one Lord, one faith, etc.

Secondly: That this one baptism, which is the baptism of Christ, is not a washing with, or dipping in water, but a being baptized by the Spirit.

Thirdly: That the baptism of John was but a figure of this; and therefore, as the figure, to give place to the substance; which though it be to continue, yet the other ceaseth.

As for the first, viz., That there is but one baptism, there needs no other proof than the words of the text, Eph. iv. 5: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism:" where the apostle positively and plainly affirms, that as there is but one body, one Spirit, one faith, one God, etc., so there is but "one baptism."

Secondly, That this one baptism, which is the baptism of Christ, is not a washing with water, appears, first, from the testimony of John, the proper and peculiar administrator of water baptism, Matt. iii. 11, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

Digitized by Google

Here John mentions two manners of baptizing, and two different baptisms; the one with water, and the other with the Spirit; the one whereof he was the minister of; the other whereof Christ was the minister of: and such as were baptized with the first, were not therefore baptized with the second.

This is further confirmed by the saying of Christ himself, Acts i. 4, 5, "But wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me: for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." There can scarce two places of scripture run more parallel than this doth with the former, a little before mentioned; and therefore concludeth the same way as did the other. For Christ here grants fully that John completed his baptism, as to the matter and substance of it: "John," saith he, "truly baptized with water;" which is as much as if he had said, John did truly and fully administer the baptism of water; "But ye shall be baptized with," etc. This showeth that they were to be baptized with some other baptism than the baptism of water; and that although they were formerly baptized with the baptism of water, yet not with that of Christ, which they were to be baptized with.

Peter observes the same distinction, Acts xi. 16, "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." The apostle makes this application upon the Holy Ghost's falling upon them; whence he infers, that they were then baptized with the baptism of the Spirit.

Digitized by Google

From all which three sentences, relative one to another, first of John, secondly of Christ, and thirdly of Peter, it doth evidently follow, that such as were truly and really baptized with the baptism of water, were notwithstanding not baptized with the baptism of the Spirit, which is that of Christ; and such as truly and really did administer the baptism of water, did, in so doing, not administer the baptism of Christ. So that if there be now but one baptism, as we have already proved, we may safely conclude that it is that of the Spirit, and not of water.

THAT THE ONE baptism of Christ is not a washing with water, appears from 1 Pet. iii. 21: "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." So plain a definition of baptism is not in all the Bible; and therefore, seeing it is so plain, it may well be preferred to all the coined definitions of the school-men. The apostle tells us first negatively what it is not, viz., "Not a putting away of the filth of the flesh:" then surely it is not a washing with water, since that is so. Secondly, he tells us affirmatively what it is, viz., "The answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" where he affirmatively defines it to be the "answer (or confession, as the Syriac version hath it) of a good conscience." Now this answer cannot be but where the Spirit of God hath purified the soul, and the fire of his judgment hath burned up the unrighteous nature; and those in whom this work is wrought may be truly said to be baptized with

Digitized by Google

the baptism of Christ, *i. e.* of the Spirit and of fire. Moreover, the apostle in this place doth seem especially to guard against those that might esteem water baptism the true baptism of Christ; because, lest by the comparison induced by him in the preceding verse, betwixt the souls that were saved in Noah's ark, and us that are now saved by baptism; lest, I say, any should have thence hastily concluded, that because the former were saved by water, this place must needs be taken to speak of water baptism, to prevent such a mistake, he plainly affirms that it is not that, but another thing. Moreover, Peter calls this here which saves ἀντίτυπον, the anti-type or the "thing figured;" whereas it is usually translated, "as if the like figure did now save us;" thereby insinuating that as they were saved by water in the ark, so are we now by water baptism. But this interpretation crosseth his sense, he presently after declaring the contrary, as hath above been observed.

That the one baptism of Christ is not a washing with water, as it hath been proved by the definition of the one baptism, so it is also manifest from the necessary fruits and effects of it, which are three times particularly expressed by the apostle Paul; as first, Rom. vi. 3, 4, where he saith, "That so many of them as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death, buried with him by baptism into death, that they should walk in newness of life." Secondly, to the Galatians, iii. 27, he saith positively, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." And thirdly, to the Colossians, ii. 12, he saith, That they were "buried with him in baptism," and risen

Digitized by Google

"with him through the faith of the operation of God." It is to be observed here, that the apostle speaks generally; he saith not, Some of you that were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, but "as many of you;" which is as much as if he had said, Every one of you that hath been baptized into Christ, hath put on Christ. Whereby it is evident that this is not meant of water baptism, but of the baptism of the Spirit; because else it would follow, that whosoever had been baptized with water baptism had put on Christ, and were risen with him.

THAT JOHN'S BAPTISM is ceased, many of our opposers confess; but if any should allege it is otherwise, it may be easily proved by the express words of John, not only as being insinuated there, where he contra-distinguisheth his baptism from that of Christ, but particularly where he saith, John iii. 30, "He [Christ] must increase, but I [John] must decrease." From whence it clearly follows, that the increasing or taking place of Christ's baptism is the decreasing or abolishing of John's baptism; so that if water baptism was a particular part of John's ministry, and is no part of Christ's baptism, as we have already proved, it will necessarily follow that it is not to continue.

If water baptism had been to continue a perpetual ordinance of Christ in his church, he would either have practised it himself, or commanded his apostles so to do. But that he practised it not, the scripture plainly affirms, John iv. 2. And that he commanded his disciples to baptize with water, I could never yet read. As for what is alleged, that Matt. xxviii. 19, etc. where he bids them baptize, is to be under-

Digitized by Google

stood of water baptism, that is but to beg the question, and the grounds for that shall be hereafter examined. I find not any standing ordinance or appointment of Christ necessary to Christians, for which we have not either Christ's own practice or command; but for baptizing with water, though so earnestly contended for, we find not any precept of Christ.

BUT TO MAKE WATER baptism a necessary institution of the Christian religion, which is pure and spiritual, and not carnal and ceremonial, is to derogate from the new covenant dispensation, and set up the legal rites and ceremonies, of which this baptism, or washing with water, was one, as appears from Heb. ix. 10, where the apostle speaking thereof saith, that "it stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation." If then the time of reformation, or the dispensation of the gospel, which puts an end to the shadows, be come, then such baptisms and carnal ordinances are no more to be imposed. For how baptism with water comes now to be a spiritual ordinance, more than before in the time of the law, doth not appear, seeing it is but water still, and a washing of the outward man, and a putting away of the filth of the flesh still: and as before, those that were so washed, were not thereby made perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, neither are they at this day. If water baptism was once a carnal ordinance, as the apostle positively affirms it to have been, it remains a carnal ordinance still; and if a carnal ordinance, then no necessary part of the gospel or new covenant dispensation; and if no necessary part of it, then not needful to continue, nor

Digitized by Google

to be practised by such as live and walk under this dispensation.

IF WATER BAPTISM had been an ordinance of the gospel, then the apostle Paul would have been sent to administer it; but he declares positively, 1 Cor. i. 17: "That Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." He being in special manner the apostle of Christ to the Gentiles, if water baptism be to be accounted the badge of Christianity, he had more need than any of the rest to be sent to baptize with water, that he might mark the Gentiles converted by him with that Christian sign. But since Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, and in his ministry doth through all, as by his epistles appears, labor to wean them from the former Jewish ceremonies and observations, his commission did not require of him that he should lead those converts into such Jewish observations and baptisms; however that practice was indulged in and practised by the other apostles among their Jewish proselytes, for which cause he thanks God that he had baptized so few: intimating that what he did therein he did in condescension to their weakness, even as at another time he circumcised Timothy.

SOME OBJECT, That Christ, who had the Spirit above measure, was notwithstanding baptized with water.

I answer, So was he also circumcised: it will not follow from thence that circumcision is to continue: for it behoved Christ to fulfil all righteousness, not only the ministry of John, but the law also; therefore did he observe the Jewish feasts and rites, and keep the passover. It will not

Digitized by Google

thence follow that Christians ought to do so now; and therefore Christ, Matt. iii. 15, gives John this reason of his being baptized, desiring him to "suffer it to be so now;" whereby he sufficiently intimates that he intended not thereby to perpetuate it as an ordinance to his disciples.

THEY OBJECT, Matt. xxviii. 19: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This is the great objection, and upon which they build the whole superstructure.

As to what Christ saith, in commanding them to "baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit," the Greek is εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, that is, *into the name;* now the name of the Lord is often taken in scripture for something else than a bare sound of words, or literal expression, even for his virtue and power, as may appear from Psal. liv. 1; Cant. i. 3; Prov. xviii. 10, and in many more. Now that the apostles were by their ministry to baptize the nations into this name, virtue, and power, and that they did so, is evident by these testimonies of Paul above mentioned, where he saith, "That as many of them as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ;" this must have been a baptizing into the name, *i. e.*, power and virtue, and not a mere formal expression of words adjoined with water baptism; because, as hath been above observed, it doth not follow as a natural or necessary consequence of it. I would have those who desire to have their faith built upon no other foundation than the testimony of God's Spirit and scriptures of truth, thoroughly to consider whether there can be any thing further

Digitized by Google

alleged for this interpretation than what the prejudice of education and influence of tradition hath imposed. Perhaps it may stumble the unwary and inconsiderate reader, as if the very character of Christianity were abolished, to tell him plainly that this scripture is not to be understood of baptizing with water, and that this form of "baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit," hath no warrant from Matt. xxviii., etc.

Let it be considered, that if it had been a form prescribed by Christ to his apostles, then surely they would have made use of that form in the administering of water baptism to such as they baptized with water; but though it be particularly expressed that they baptized such and such, as Acts ii. 41, and viii. 12, 13, 38, and ix. 18, and x. 48, and xvi. 15, and xviii. 8, yet there is not a word of this form. And in two places, Acts viii. 16, and xix. 5, it is said of some that they were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus;" by which it appears, that the apostles did no ways understand that Christ by his commission, Matt. xxviii., did enjoin them such a form of water baptism, seeing they did not use it. And therefore it is safer to conclude, that what they did in administering water baptism, they did not by virtue of that commission, else they would have so used it: for our adversaries I suppose would judge it a great heresy to administer water baptism only in the name of Jesus, without mention of Father or Spirit, as it is expressly said they did, in the two places above cited.

They say, If this were not understood of water baptism, it would be a tautology, and all one with teaching.

Digitized by Google

I say, Nay: Baptizing with the Spirit is somewhat further than teaching, or informing the understanding; for it imports a reaching to, and melting the heart, whereby it is turned, as well as the understanding informed.

They say, Baptism in this place must be understood with water, because it is the action of the apostles; and so cannot be the baptism of the Spirit, which is the work of Christ, and his grace; not of man, etc.

I answer; Baptism with the Spirit, though not wrought without Christ and his grace, is instrumentally done by men fitted of God for that purpose; and therefore no absurdity follows, that baptism with the Spirit should be expressed as the action of the apostles. For though it be Christ by his grace that gives spiritual gifts, yet the apostle, Rom. i. 11, speaks of his imparting to them spiritual gifts; and he tells the Corinthians, that he had "begotten them through the gospel," 1 Cor. iv. 15. And yet to beget people to the faith, is the work of Christ and his grace, not of men. To convert the heart, is properly the work of Christ; and yet the scripture oftentimes ascribes it to men, as being the instruments.

THEY OBJECT THE constant practice of the apostles in the primitive church, who, they say, did always administer water baptism to such as they converted to the faith of Christ.

I answer; That it was the constant practice of the apostles, is denied; for we have shown, in the example of Paul, that it was not so; since it were most absurd to judge that he converted only those few, even of the church of Corinth,

Digitized by Google

whom he saith he baptized; nor were it less absurd to think that that was a constant apostolic practice, which he, who was not inferior to the chiefest of the apostles, and who declares he labored as much as they all, rejoiceth he was so little in.

But if from the sameness of the word, because Christ bids them baptize, and they afterwards in the use of water are said to baptize, it be judged probable that they did understand that commission, Matt. xxviii., to authorize them to baptize with water, and accordingly practised it; I answer.

Although it should be granted, that for a season they did so far mistake it, as to judge that water belonged to that baptism, which however I find no necessity of granting, yet I see not any great absurdity would thence follow. For it is plain they did mistake that commission, as to a main part of it, for a season; as where he bids them "Go, teach all nations;" since some time after they judged it unlawful to teach the Gentiles; yea, Peter himself scrupled it, until by a vision constrained thereunto; for which, after he had done it, he was for a season, until they were better informed, judged by the rest of his brethren. Now, if the education of the apostles as Jews, and their propensity to adhere and stick to the Jewish religion, did so far influence them, that even after Christ's resurrection, and the pouring forth of the Spirit, they could not receive nor admit of the teaching of the Gentiles, though Christ, in his commission to them, commanded them to preach to them; what further absurdity were it to suppose, that, through the like mistake,

Digitized by Google

the chiefest of them having been the disciples of John, and his baptism being so much prized there among the Jews, they also took Christ's baptism, intended by him of the Spirit, to be that of water, which was John's, and accordingly practised it for a season? It suffices us, that if they were so mistaken, though I say not that they were so, they did not always remain under that mistake: else Peter would not have said of the baptism which now saves, "that it is not a putting away of the filth of the flesh," which certainly water baptism is.

But further, They urge much Peter's baptizing Cornelius; in which they press two things, First, That water baptism is used, even to those that had received the Spirit. Secondly, That it is said positively, "he commanded them to be baptized," Acts x. 47, 48.

But neither of these doth necessarily infer water baptism to belong to the new covenant dispensation, nor yet to be a perpetual standing ordinance in the church. It is no wonder if Peter, who thought it so strange (notwithstanding all that had been spoken by Christ), that the Gentiles should be made partakers of the gospel, and who with great difficulty was brought to come to them and eat with them, was inclined to put this ceremony upon them; which being, as it were, the particular dispensation of John, the forerunner of Christ, seemed to have greater affinity with the gospel, than the other Jewish ceremonies then used by the church. As to these words, "And he commanded them to be baptized;" it amounteth to no more, than that Peter did at that time command those persons to be baptized with

Digitized by Google

water; but it saith nothing that Peter commanded water baptism to be a standing and perpetual ordinance to the church. Why doth Peter's commanding Cornelius and his household to be baptized at that time infer water baptism to continue, more than his constraining, which is more than commanding, the Gentiles in general to be circumcised, and observe the law? We find at that time, when Peter baptized Cornelius, it was not yet determined whether the Gentiles should not be circumcised; but on the contrary, it was the most general sense of the church that they should: and therefore no wonder if they thought it needful at that time that they should be baptized; which had more affinity with the gospel.

THEY OBJECT FROM the signification of the word *baptize*, which is as much as to dip and wash with water; alleging thence, that the very word imports a being baptized with water.

But baptizing with water was a rite among the Jews, as Paulus Riccius showeth, even before the coming of John: and the ceremony received that name from the nature of the practice, as used both by the Jews and by John; yet we find that Christ and his apostles frequently make use of these terms to a more spiritual signification. So circumcision was only used and understood among the Jews to be that of the flesh; but the apostle tells us of the circumcision of the heart and spirit made without hands. So that though baptism was used among the Jews only to signify a washing with water, yet both John, Christ, and his apostles, speak of a being "baptized with the Spirit, and with

Digitized by Google

fire;" which they make the peculiar baptism of Christ, as contradistinguished from that of water, which was John's, as is above shown. So that though baptism among the Jews was only understood of water, yet among Christians it is very well understood of the Spirit without water.

THEY OBJECT, John iii. 5, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit," etc., hence inferring the necessity of water baptism, as well as of the Spirit.

But if this prove any thing, it will prove water baptism to be of absolute necessity; and therefore Protestants rightly affirm, when this is urged upon them by Papists, to evince the absolute necessity of water baptism, that *water* is not here understood of outward water; but mystically, of an inward cleansing and washing. Even as where Christ speaks of being baptized with fire, it is not to be understood of outward material fire, but only of purifying, by a metonymy; because to purify is a proper effect of fire, as to wash and make clean is of water; therefore the scripture alludes to water, where it can as little be so understood, as where we are said to be saved by the washing of regeneration, Tit. iii. 5.

THEY OBJECT, That the baptism of water is a visible sign or badge to distinguish Christians from infidels, even as circumcision did the Jews.

I answer; This saith nothing at all, unless it be proved to be a necessary precept, or part of the new covenant dispensation; it not being lawful for us to impose outward ceremonies and rights, and say, they will distinguish us from infidels. Circumcision was positively commanded,

Digitized by Google

and said to be a seal of the first covenant; but as we have already proved that there is no such command for baptism, so there is not any word in all the New Testament, calling it a badge of Christianity, or seal of the new covenant. The professing of faith in Christ, and a holy life answering thereunto, is a far better badge of Christianity than any outward washing. A Christian is not known to be a Christian by his being baptized, especially when he was a child, unless he tell them so much; and may not the professing of faith in Christ signify that as well? I know there are divers of those called the Fathers, that speak much of water baptism, calling it *Characterum Christianitatis:* but so did they also of the sign of the cross, and other such things, justly rejected by Protestants. For the mystery of iniquity, which began to work in the apostles' days, soon spoiled the simplicity and purity of the Christian worship; insomuch that not only many Jewish rites were retained, but many heathenish customs and ceremonies introduced into the Christian worship; as particularly that word *sacrament.*

As for infant baptism, it is a tradition without precept or example in Scripture. He that proves water baptism ceased, proves that infant baptism is vain: but he that should prove that water baptism continues, has not thence proved that infant baptism is necessary; that needs something further.

We travail above all to lay hold upon and cleave unto the Light of the glorious gospel revealed unto us. And the harmony of the truth we profess in this may appear, by

Digitized by Google

briefly observing how in all things we follow the spiritual gospel of Christ, as contradistinguished from the carnality of the legal dispensation; while others through rejecting this gospel, are still laboring under the burden of the law, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.

For the law and rule of the old covenant and Jews was outward, written in tables of stone and parchment. But the law of the new covenant is inward and perpetual, written in the heart. The worship of the Jews was outward, and limited to set times, places, and persons, and performed according to set prescribed forms and observations. But the worship of the new covenant is neither limited to time, place, nor person, but is performed in the Spirit and in truth; not according to set forms and prescriptions, but as the Spirit of God immediately moves, and leads.

So likewise the baptism among the Jews under the law was an outward washing with outward water, only to typify an inward purification of the soul, which did not necessarily follow upon those that were thus baptized; but the baptism of Christ under the gospel is the baptism of the Spirit and of fire; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God; and such is the baptism that we labor to be baptized withal, and contend for.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION XIII.

CONCERNING THE COMMUNION, OR PARTICIPATION OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST.

THE communion of the body and blood of Christ is inward and spiritual, which is the participation of his flesh and blood, by which the inward man is daily nourished in the hearts of those in whom Christ dwells. Of which things the breaking of bread by Christ with his disciples was a figure, which even they who had received the substance used in the church for a time, for the sake of the weak; even as abstaining from things strangled, and from blood, the washing one another's feet, and the anointing of the sick with oil: all which are commanded with no less authority and solemnity than the former; yet seeing they are but shadows of better things, they cease in such as have obtained the substance.

1 Cor. x. 16, 17. John vi. 32, 33, 35. 1 Cor. v. 8.

Acts xv. 20. John xiii. 14. James v. 14.

THE COMMUNION OF the body and blood of Christ is a mystery hid from all natural men, in their first fallen state, which they cannot understand as they there abide; neither can they be partakers of it, nor yet are they able to discern the Lord's body. And forasmuch as the Christian world,

Digitized by Google

so called, for the most part hath been laboring in their own natural understandings, about the things of God and religion; therefore hath this mystery been much hid and sealed up from them, while they have been contending about the form, but strangers to the substance, life, and virtue.

THE BODY THEN OF Christ, which believers partake of, is spiritual, and not carnal; and his blood, which they drink of, is pure and heavenly, and not human or elementary. It is that heavenly seed, that divine, spiritual, celestial substance, of which we spake before in the fifth and sixth propositions. This is that spiritual body of Christ, whereby and through which he communicateth life to men, and salvation to as many as believe in him, and receive him; and whereby also man comes to have fellowship and communion with God.

This is proved from the sixth of John, from verse 32 to the end, where Christ speaks more at large of this matter, than in any other place: and indeed this evangelist and beloved disciple, who lay in the bosom of our Lord, gives us a more full account of the spiritual sayings and doctrine of Christ than any other: and it is observable, that though he speaks nothing of the ceremony used by Christ of breaking bread with his disciples, neither in his evangelical account of Christ's life and sufferings, nor in his epistles; yet he is more large in this account of the participation of the body, flesh, and blood of Christ, than any of them all. For Christ, in this chapter, perceiving that the Jews did follow him for love of the loaves, desires them, verse 27, to "labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that

Digitized by Google

meat which endureth for ever:" but forasmuch as they, not understanding the spiritual language and doctrine of Christ, did judge the manna which Moses gave their fathers, to be the most excellent bread, as coming from heaven; Christ, to better inform them, affirmeth, First, That it is not Moses, but his Father, that giveth the true bread from heaven, verses 32 and 48. Secondly, This bread he calls himself, verse 35, "I am the bread of life:" and verse 51, "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven." Thirdly, He declares that this bread is his flesh, verse 51, "The bread that I will give, is my flesh;" and verse 55, "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink in deed." Fourthly, The necessity of partaking thereof, verse 53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And lastly, The blessed fruits and necessary effects of this communion of the body and blood of Christ, verse 33, "This bread giveth life to the world." Verse 50, He that eateth thereof, dieth not. Verse 58, "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." Verse 54, Whoso eateth this flesh, and drinketh this blood, shall live for ever. Verse 56, And he dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him. Verse 57, And shall live by Christ.

From this large description of the origin, nature, and effects of this body, flesh, and blood of Christ, it is apparent that it is spiritual, and to be understood of a spiritual body, and not of that body, or temple of Jesus Christ, which was born of the Virgin Mary, and in which he walked, lived, and suffered in the land of Judea; because it is said, that it came down from heaven. Now the outward body of

Digitized by Google

Christ came not down from heaven. Also, it is the soul, not the body, that is to be nourished by this flesh and blood. Now outward flesh cannot nourish nor feed the soul.

That this body, and spiritual flesh and blood of Christ, is to be understood of that divine and heavenly seed, before spoken of by us, appears both by the nature and fruits of it. First, it is said, it is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world: now this answers to that light and seed, which is testified of, John i., to be the light of the world, and the life of men. For that spiritual light and seed, as it receives place in men's hearts, and room to spring up there, is as bread to the hungry and fainting soul, that is, as it were, buried and dead in the lusts of the world; which receives life again, and revives, as it tasteth and partaketh of this heavenly bread: and they that partake of it are said to come to Christ; neither can any have it, but by coming to him, and believing in the appearance of his light in their hearts; by receiving which, and believing in it, the participation of this body and bread is known. And that Christ understands the same thing here by his body, flesh, and blood, which is understood, John i., by the "light enlightening every man," and the life, etc., appears; for the light and life, spoken of John i., is said to be Christ; "He is the true light:" and the bread and flesh, etc., spoken of in John vi., is called Christ; "I am the bread of life," saith he. Again, They that received that light and life, John i. 12, obtained power to become the sons of God, by believing in his name: so also here, John vi. 35, he that cometh unto this bread of life shall not

Digitized by Google

hunger; and he that believes in him, who is this bread, shall never thirst. So, then, as there was the outward visible body and temple of Jesus Christ, which took its origin from the Virgin Mary; there is also the spiritual body of Christ, by and through which He that was the "Word in the beginning with God," and was and is GOD, did reveal himself to the sons of men in all ages, and whereby men in all ages come to be made partakers of eternal life, and to have communion and fellowship with God and Christ.

Now as the outward body and temple was called Christ, so was also his spiritual body, no less properly, and that long before that outward body was in being. Hence the apostle saith, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4, that the "Fathers did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." This cannot be understood otherwise than of this spiritual body of Christ; which spiritual body of Christ, though it was the saving food of the righteous both before the law and under the law; yet under the law it was veiled and shadowed under divers types; yea, and not only so, but it was veiled and hid, in some respects, under the outward body of Christ, or during the continuance of it; so that the Jews could not understand Christ's preaching about it while on earth; and not the Jews only, but many of his disciples, judging it a hard John vi. 60, 66. saying, murmured at it; and many from that time went back from him, and walked no more with him. I doubt not but that there are many also at this day, professing to be the disciples of Christ, that do as little understand this

Digitized by Google

matter as those did, and are as apt to be offended, and stumble at it, while they are gazing and following after the outward body, and look not to that by which the saints are daily fed and nourished.

For as Jesus Christ, in obedience to the will of the Father, did by the eternal Spirit offer up that body for a propitiation for the remission of sins, and finished his testimony upon earth thereby, in a most perfect example of patience, resignation, and holiness, that all might be made partakers of the fruit of that sacrifice; so hath he likewise poured forth into the hearts of all men a measure of that divine light and seed wherewith he is clothed; that thereby, reaching unto the consciences of all, he may raise them up out of death and darkness by his life and light; and thereby may be made partakers of his body, and there-through come to have fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

IF IT BE ASKED, How and after what manner man comes to partake of it, and to be fed by it? I answer in the plain and express words of Christ, "I am the bread of life," saith he; "he that cometh to me shall never hunger; he that believeth in me shall never thirst." And again, "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." So whosoever thou art that askest this question, or readest these lines, whether thou accountest thyself a believer, or really feelest, by a certain and sad experience, that thou art yet in the unbelief, and findest that the outward body and flesh of Christ is so far from thee, that thou canst not reach it, nor feed upon it; yea, though thou be one who has often swallowed down and taken in

John vi. 35 and 55.

Digitized by Google

that which the Papists have persuaded thee to be the real flesh and blood of Christ, and hast believed it to be so, though all thy senses told thee the contrary; or, being a Lutheran, hast taken that bread, in and with and under which the Lutherans have assured thee that the flesh and blood of Christ is; or, being a Calvinist, hast partaken of that which the Calvinists say, though a figure only of the body, gives them who take it a real participation of the body, flesh, and blood of Christ, though they never knew how nor what way; I say, if for all this thou findest thy soul yet barren, yea, hungry, and ready to starve, for want of something thou longest for; know that that light that discovers thy iniquity to thee, that shows thee thy barrenness, thy emptiness, is that body which thou must partake of, and feed upon: but that till by forsaking iniquity thou turnest to it, comest unto it, receivest it, though thou mayest hunger after it, thou canst not be satisfied with it; for it hath no communion with darkness, nor canst 2 Cor. vi. 14. thou drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: and be partaker of the Lord's table, and the table of devils," 1 Cor. x. 21.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood," saith Christ, "dwelleth in me, and I in him." This John vi. 56. cannot be understood of outward eating of outward bread; and as by this the soul must have fellowship with God, so also, so far as all the saints are partakers of this one body and one blood, they come also to have a joint communion. Hence the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 17, in this respect saith, that they "being many, are one bread, and one body;" and to

Digitized by Google

the wise among the Corinthians he saith, "The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" This is the true and spiritual supper of the Lord, which men come to partake of, by hearing the voice of Christ, and opening the door of their hearts, and so letting him in, according to the plain words of the scripture, Rev. iii. 20, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." So that the supper of the Lord, and the supping with the Lord, and partaking of his flesh and blood, is no ways limited to the ceremony of breaking bread and drinking wine at particular times, but is truly and really enjoyed, as often as the soul retires into the light of the Lord, and feels and partakes of that heavenly life by which the inward man is nourished; which may be and is often witnessed by the faithful at all times, though more particularly when they are assembled together to wait upon the Lord.

BUT WHAT CONFUSION the professors of Christianity have run into who, for want of a true spiritual understanding, have sought to tie this supper of the Lord to that ceremony used by Christ before his death, of breaking bread and drinking wine with his disciples. And though they for the most part agree generally in this, yet how do they contend and debate one against another! Now all those uncertain opinions, and the contentions therefrom arising, have proceeded from their all agreeing in two general errors concerning this thing; which being denied and receded from, as they are by us, there would be an easy way made for

Digitized by Google

reconciliation, and we should all meet in one spiritual and true understanding of this mystery.

The first of these errors is, in making the communion or participation of the body, flesh, and blood of Christ to relate to that outward body, vessel, or temple, that was born of the Virgin Mary, and walked and suffered in Judea; whereas it should relate to the spiritual body, flesh, and blood of Christ, even that heavenly and celestial light and life, which was the food and nourishment of the regenerate in all ages, as we have already proved.

The second error is, in tying this participation of the body and blood of Christ to that ceremony used by him with his disciples in the breaking of bread, etc., as if it had only a relation thereto, or were only enjoyed in the use of that ceremony.

Now THE COMMUNION or participation of the flesh and blood of Christ hath no such necessary relation to the breaking of bread and drinking of wine: for if it had any such necessary relation, it would either be from the nature of the thing, or from some divine precept.

It is not from the nature of it; because to partake of the flesh and blood of Christ is a spiritual exercise. But to eat bread and drink wine is a natural act, which in itself adds nothing to the soul, neither has anything that is spiritual in it. All acknowledge that many eat of the bread and drink of the wine, even that which they say is consecrate and transubstantiate into the very body of Christ, who notwithstanding have not life eternal, have not Christ dwelling in them, nor do live by him, as all do who truly partake of the flesh and blood of Christ.

Digitized by Google

It hath not relation by divine precept; for if it had, it would be mentioned in that which is accounted the institution of it, or else in the practice of it by the saints recorded in scripture; but so it is not. For as to the institution, or rather narration, of Christ's practice in this matter, we have it recorded by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In the first two there is only an account of the matter-of-fact, to wit, That, Christ brake bread, and gave it his disciples to eat, saying, "This is my body;" and blessing the cup, he gave it them to drink, saying, "This is my blood;" but nothing of any desire to them to do it. In the last, after the bread (but before the blessing, or giving them the wine), he bids them do it in remembrance of him. The end of this for which they were to do it, if at all, is to remember Christ; which the apostle yet more particularly expresses, 1 Cor. xi. 26, "to show forth the Lord's death;" but to remember the Lord, or to declare his death, which are the special ends annexed to the use of this ceremony, is not at all to partake of the flesh and blood of Christ; neither have they any more necessary relation to it than any other two different spiritual duties.

BUT IF IT BE SAID, That Jesus Christ calls the bread here his body, and the wine his blood, therefore he seems to have had a special relation to his disciples partaking of his flesh and blood in the use of this thing;

I answer, His calling the bread his body, and the wine his blood, would yet infer no such thing; though it is not denied but that Jesus Christ, in all things he did, yea, and from the use of all natural things, took occasion to raise the

Digitized by Google

minds of his disciples and hearers to spirituals. Hence from the woman of Samaria drawing water, he took occasion to tell her of that living water, which "whoso drinketh of shall never thirst;" which indeed is all one with his blood here spoken of; yet it will not follow that that well or water had any necessary relation to the living water, or the living water to it, etc. So Christ takes occasion, from the Jews following him for the loaves, to tell them of this spiritual bread and flesh of his body, which was more necessary for them to feed upon; it will not therefore follow that their following him for the loaves had any necessary relation thereunto. So also Christ here, being at supper with his disciples, takes occasion, from the bread and wine which was before them, to signify unto them, That as that bread which he brake unto them, and that wine which he blessed and gave unto them, did contribute to the preserving and nourishing of their bodies, so was he also to give his body and shed his blood for the salvation of their souls. And therefore the very end proposed in this ceremony to those that observe it is, to be a memorial of his death.

But if it be said, That the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 16, calls the bread which he brake the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup the communion of his blood; I do most willingly subscribe unto it; but do deny that this is understood of the outward bread; for the apostle in this chapter speaks not one word of that ceremony; for having in the beginning of it shown them how the Jews of old were made partakers of the spiritual food and water, which was Christ, and how several of them, through disobedience and

Digitized by Google

idolatry, fell from that good condition, he exhorts them, by the example of those Jews whom God destroyed of old, to flee those evils; showing them that they, to wit, the Corinthians, are likewise partakers of the body and blood of Christ; of which communion they would rob themselves if they did evil, because "they could not drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, and partake of the Lord's table and the table of devils," ver. 21, which shows that he understands not here the using of outward bread and wine; because those that do drink the cup of devils, and eat of the table of devils, yea, the wickedest of men, may partake of the outward bread and outward wine.

BUT THAT WHICH THEY most of all are always urging, is from 1 Cor. xi., where the apostle calls the cup the "cup of the Lord;" and saith, "That they who eat of it and drink it unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord;" and ver. 29, Eat and drink their own damnation.

Now his calling the cup "the cup of the Lord," and saying, They are guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and eat their own damnation in not discerning the Lord's body, etc., amounts to no more than this, That since the Corinthians were in the use of this ceremony, and so performed it as a religious act, they ought to do it worthily, or else they should bring condemnation upon themselves. Now this will not more infer the thing so practised by them to be a necessary religious act obligatory upon others, than when the apostle saith, Rom. xiv. 6, "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord," it can be thence in-

Digitized by Google

ferred that the days that some esteemed and observed did lay an obligation upon others to do the same. But yet, as he that esteemed a day, and placed conscience in keeping it, was to regard it to the Lord, and so he was to do it worthily; and if he did it unworthily, he would be guilty of the Lord's day, and so keep it to his own damnation; so also such as observe this ceremony of bread and wine, it is to them the bread of the Lord, and the cup of the Lord, because they use it as a religious act; and forasmuch as their end therein is to show forth the Lord's death, and remember his body that was crucified for them, and his blood that was shed for them, if they do it without that due preparation and examination which every religious act ought to be performed in, then, instead of truly remembering the Lord's death, and his body and his blood, they render themselves guilty of it, as being in one spirit with those that crucified him, and shed his blood, though pretending with thanksgiving and joy to remember it.

And that no more can be hence inferred, appears from another saying of the same apostle, Rom. xiv. 23, "He that doubteth is damned if he eat," etc., where he, speaking of those that judged it unlawful to eat flesh, etc., saith, If they eat doubting, they eat their own damnation. Now it is manifest from all this, that either the doing or forbearing of this was to another, that placed no conscience in it, of no moment. So I say, he that eateth that which in his conscience he is persuaded it is not lawful for him to eat, doth eat his own damnation; so he also that placeth conscience in eating bread and wine as a religious act, if he do

Digitized by Google

it unprepared, and without that due respect wherein such acts should be gone about, he eateth and drinketh his own damnation, not discerning the Lord's body, *i. e.*, not minding what he doth, to wit, with a special respect to the Lord, and by way of special commemoration of the death of Christ.

WE FIND THIS ceremony only mentioned in scripture in four places, to wit, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and by Paul to the Corinthians. Matthew and Mark give only an account of the matter-of-fact, without any precept to do so afterwards; simply declaring, that Jesus at that time did desire them to eat of the bread, and drink of the cup; to which Luke adds these words, "This do in remembrance of me." If we consider this action of Christ with his apostles, there will appear nothing for a foundation to such a superstructure as many have sought to build upon it: for both Matthew and Mark express it as an act done by him as he was eating. Matthew saith, "And as they were eating;" and Mark, "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread," etc. Now this act was no singular thing, neither any solemn institution of a gospel ordinance; because it was a constant custom among the Jews, as Paulus Riccius observes at length in his Celestial Agriculture, that when they did eat the passover, the master of the family did take bread, and bless it, and breaking it, gave of it to the rest; and likewise taking wine, did the same. Jesus Christ, who fulfilled all righteousness, and also observed the Jewish feasts and customs. used this also among his disciples; and as in most other things

Matt. xxvi. 26.
Mark xiv. 22.
Luke xxii. 19.
1 Cor. xi. 23, etc.

Digitized by Google

he labored to draw their minds to a further thing, so in the use of this he takes occasion to put them in mind of his death and sufferings, which were shortly to be.

And that expression of Luke, "Do this in remembrance of me," amounts to no more than this, that being the last time that Christ did eat with his disciples, he desired them, that in their eating and drinking they might have regard to him, and by the remembering of that opportunity, be the more stirred up to follow him diligently through sufferings and death, etc. But what man of reason, laying aside the prejudice of education, and the influence of tradition, will say, that this account of the matter-of-fact given by Matthew and Mark, or this expression of Luke, to "do that in remembrance of him," will amount to these consequences which the generality of Christians have sought to draw from it; as calling it the principal seal of the covenant of grace, by which all the benefits of Christ's death are sealed to believers.

But to give a further evidence, how these consequences have not any foundation from the practice of that ceremony, nor from the words following, "do this," etc., let us consider another of the like nature, as it is at length expressed by John, chap. xiii. 4, 5, 8, 12, 14, 15: "Jesus riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself: after that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded: Peter said unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet: Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. So after

Digitized by Google

he had washed their feet, he said, Know ye what I have done to you? If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet: for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

As to which, let it be observed, that John relates this passage to have been done at the same time with the other of breaking bread; both being done the night of the pass-over, after supper. If we regard the narration of this, and the circumstances attending it, it was done with far more solemnity, and prescribed far more punctually and particularly than the former. It is said only, "As he was eating, he took bread;" but here he rose up, he laid by his garments, he girded himself, he poured out the water, he washed their feet, he wiped them with a towel; he did this to all of them; which are circumstances surely far more observable than those noted in the other. The former was a practice common among the Jews, used by all masters of families upon that occasion; but this, as to the manner, and person acting it, to wit, for the master to rise up, and wash the feet of his servants and disciples, was more singular and observable. In the breaking of bread, and giving of wine, it is not mentioned that he particularly put them into the hands of all; but breaking it, and blessing it, gave it the nearest, and so they from hand to hand; but here it is mentioned, that he washed not the feet of one or two, but of many. He saith not in the former, that if they do not eat of that bread, and drink of that wine, they shall be prejudiced by it; but here he saith expressly to Peter, that if he wash

Digitized by Google

him not, he hath no part with him. In the former he saith, as it were passingly, Do this in remembrance of me; but here he sitteth down again, he desires them to consider what he hath done, tells them positively, that as he hath done to them, so ought they to do to one another; and yet again, he redoubles that precept, by telling them, he has given them an example, that they should do so likewise.

If we respect the nature of the thing, it hath as much in it as either baptism or the breaking of bread; seeing it is an outward element of a cleansing nature, applied to the outward man, by the command and the example of Christ, to signify an inward purifying. I would willingly propose this seriously to men, who will be pleased to make use of that understanding that God hath given them, and not be imposed upon by the custom or tradition of others; Whether this ceremony, if we respect either the time that it was appointed in, or the circumstances wherewith it was performed, or the command enjoining the use of it, hath not as much to recommend it for a standing ordinance of the gospel, as either water baptism, or bread and wine, or any other of that kind? If they say, That the former, of washing the feet, was only a ceremony; what have they, whence they can show, that this breaking of bread is more? If they say, That the former was only a sign of humility and purifying; what have they to prove that this was more? If they say, That one was only for a time, and was no evangelical ordinance; what hath this to make it such, that the other wanted. Neither can anything be alleged, that the one should cease, and not the other; or the one continue,

Digitized by Google

and not the other, but the mere opinion of the affirmers; which by custom, education, and tradition hath begotten in the hearts of people a greater reverence for, and esteem of the one than the other.

WHAT INCONVENIENCES have Christians brought upon themselves, by superstitiously adhering to this ceremony! Out of which difficulties it is impossible for them to extricate themselves, but by laying it aside, as they have done others of the like nature. For besides what is above-mentioned, I would gladly know how from the words they can be certainly resolved that these words "Do this" must be understood to the clergy, Take, bless, and break this bread, and give it to others; but to the laity only, Take and eat, but do not bless.

If it be said, That the clergy were only present;

Then may not another from thence as easily infer, that the clergy only ought to partake of this ceremony; because they were the apostles only then present, to whom it was said, Do this? But if this [Do this] be extended to all, how comes it all have not liberty to obey it, in both blessing, breaking, and distributing, as well as taking and eating? Besides all these, even the Calvinist Protestants of Great Britain could never yet accord among themselves about the manner of taking it, whether sitting, standing, or kneeling; whether it should be given to the sick, and those that are ready to die, or not. Which controversies, though they may be esteemed of small moment, yet have greatly contributed, with other things, to be the occasion not only of much contention, but also of bloodshed and devastation.

Digitized by Google

HAVE WE NOT REASON, not finding the nature of this practice to be obligatory upon us, more than those others which our adversaries have laid aside, to avoid this confusion; since those that use it can never agree, neither concerning the nature, efficacy, nor manner of doing it? And this proceeds, because they take it not plainly, as it lies in the scripture. For would they take it as it lies, it would import no more, than that Jesus Christ at that time did thereby signify unto them, that his body and blood was to be offered for them; and desired them, that whensoever they did eat or drink, they might do it in remembrance of him; or with a regard to him, whose blood was shed for them.

Now that the primitive church gathered immediately after his ascension, did so understand it, doth appear from their use and practice; as first, Acts ii. 42, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread," etc. This cannot be understood of any other than of their ordinary eating; for as nothing else appears from the text, so the context makes it plain; for they had all things in common: and therefore it is said, verse 46, "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Those who will not wilfully close their eyes, may see here, that the breaking being joined with their eating, shows that nothing else is here expressed, but that having all things in common, and so continuing together, they also did break their bread and eat their meat together: in doing whereof, I cannot doubt but they remembered the Lord; to

Digitized by Google

follow whom they had, with so much zeal and resignation, betaken themselves.

This is further manifest from Acts vi. 2; for the apostles, having the care and distribution of that money which the believers, having sold their possessions, gave unto them, and finding themselves overcharged with that burthen, appointed deacons for that business, that they might give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word; not leaving that to serve tables. This cannot be meant of any sacramental eating, or religious act of worship; seeing our opposers make the distributing of that the proper act of ministers, not of deacons: and yet there can be no reason alleged, that that breaking of bread, which they are said to have continued in, and to have done from house to house, was other than those tables which the apostles served; but here gave over, as finding themselves overcharged with it.

Now as the increase of the disciples did incapacitate the apostles any more to manage this, so it would seem their further increase, and dispersing in divers places, hindered the continuance of that practice of having things in common; but notwithstanding, so far at least to remember or continue that ancient community, they did at certain times come together, and break bread together. Hence it is said, Acts xx. 7, on Paul's coming to Troas, that "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight." Here is no mention made of any sacramental eating; but only

Digitized by Google

that Paul took occasion from their being together to preach unto them. These words joined together [and when he had broken bread, and eaten, and talked] show it was no religious act of worship, but only an eating for bodily refreshment, for which the Christians used to meet together some time; and doing it in God's fear, and singleness of heart, doth notwithstanding difference it from the eating or feasting of profane persons.

But let it be observed, that in all the Acts there is no other nor further mention of this matter. But if that ceremony had been some solemn sacrifice, as some will have it, or such a special sacrament as others plead it to be; it is strange that that history, which in many less things gives a particular account of the Christians' behavior, should have been so silent in the matter: only we find that they used sometimes to meet together to break bread and eat. Now as the early Christians began by degrees to depart from that primitive purity and simplicity, so did they also to accumulate superstitious traditions, and vitiate the innocent practices of their predecessors, by the intermixing either of Jewish or heathenish rites; and likewise in the use of this, abuses began very early to creep in among Christians, so that it was needful for the apostle Paul to reform them, and reprove them for it, as he doth at large, 1 Cor. xi., from verse 17 to the end. The apostle condemns them, in that, because this custom of supping in general was used among Christians to increase their love, and as a memorial of Christ's supping with the disciples, they had so vitiated it as to eat it apart; and to come full, who had

Digitized by Google

abundance; and hungry, who had little at home; whereby the very use and end of this practice was lost and perverted: and therefore he blames them, that they did not either eat this in common at home, or reserve their eating till they came all together to the public assembly.

Because this custom of eating and drinking together some time, had its rise from Christ's act with the apostles, the night he was betrayed, therefore the apostle proceeds, verse 23, to give them an account of that: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread," etc. Those that understand the difference betwixt a narration of a thing, and a command, cannot but see, if they will, that there is no command in this place, but only an account of matter-of-fact; he saith not, I received of the Lord, that as he took bread, so I should command it to you to do so likewise; there is nothing like this in the place: yea, on the contrary, verse 25, where he repeats Christ's imperative words to his apostles, he placeth them so as they import no command; "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me:" and then he adds, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come:" but these words "as often" import no more a command, than to say, As often as thou goest to Rome, see the Capitol, will infer a command to me to go thither.

But whereas they urge the last words, "Ye show forth the Lord's death till he come;" insinuating, That this imports a necessary continuance of that ceremony, until Christ come at the end of the world to judgment;

Digitized by Google

I answer; They take two of the chief parts of the controversy here for granted, without proof. First, that "as often" imports a command; the contrary whereof is shown; neither will they ever be able to prove it. Secondly, That this coming is to be understood of Christ's last outward coming, and not of his inward and spiritual, that remains to be proved: whereas the apostle might well understand it of his inward coming and appearance, which perhaps some of those carnal Corinthians, that used to come drunken together, had not yet known; and others, being weak among them, and inclinable to dote upon outwards, this might have been indulged to them for a season, and even used by those who knew Christ's appearance in Spirit (as other things were), especially by the apostle, who became weak to the weak, and all to all, that he might save some.

SEVERAL TESTIMONIES of scripture do sufficiently show, that such external rites are no necessary part of the new covenant dispensation, therefore not needful now to continue, however they were for a season practised of old. The first is Rom. xiv. 17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Another of the same apostle is yet more plain, Col. ii. 16, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink," etc. "Which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ." Then since our opposers confess, that their bread and wine is a sign or shadow: therefore, according to the apostle's doctrine, we ought not to be judged in the non-observation of it. But is it unfit for those that are dead with Christ to be subject to such

Digitized by Google

ordinances? See what he saith, verse 20. "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (Touch not, taste not, handle not: which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

But doth not this contending for the use of water, bread, and wine, as necessary parts of the gospel worship, destroy the nature of it, as if the gospel were a dispensation of shadows, and not of the substance? Whereas the apostle, in that of the Colossians above mentioned, argues against the use of these things, as needful to those that are dead and arisen with Christ, because they are but shadows. And since, through the whole Epistle to the Hebrews, he argues with the Jews, to wean them from their old worship, for this reason, because it was typical and figurative; is it agreeable to right reason to bring them to another of the same nature? What ground from scripture or reason can our opposers bring us, to evince that one shadow or figure should point to another shadow or figure, and not to the substance? And yet they make the figure of circumcision to point to water baptism, and the paschal lamb to bread and wine.

If any now at this day, from a true tenderness of spirit, and with real conscience towards God, did practise this ceremony in the same way, method, and manner as did the primitive Christians recorded in scripture, I should not doubt to affirm but they might be indulged in it, and the Lord might regard them, and for a season appear to them

Digitized by Google

in the use of these things, as many of us have known him to do to us in the time of our ignorance; providing always they did not seek to obtrude them upon others, nor judge such as found themselves delivered from them, or that they do not pertinaciously adhere to them. For we certainly know that the day is dawned, in which God hath arisen, and hath dismissed all those ceremonies and rites, and is only to be worshipped in Spirit, and that he appears to them who wait upon him; and that to seek God in these things is, with Mary at thē sepulchre, to seek the living among the dead: for we know that he is risen, and revealed in Spirit, leading his children out of these rudiments, that they may walk with him in his light: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION XIV.

CONCERNING THE POWER OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE IN MATTERS PURELY RELIGIOUS, AND PERTAINING TO THE CONSCIENCE.

SINCE God hath assumed to himself the power and dominion of the conscience, who alone can rightly instruct and govern it, therefore it is not lawful for any, whosoever, by virtue of any authority or principality they bear in the government of this world, to force the consciences of others; and therefore all killing, banishing, fining, imprisoning, and other such things which are inflicted upon men for the alone exercise of their conscience, or difference in worship or opinion, proceedeth from the spirit of Cain the murderer, and is contrary to the truth; providing always, that no man, under the pretence of conscience, prejudice his neighbor in his life or estate, or do anything destructive to, or inconsistent with, human society; in which case the law is for the transgressor, and justice is to be administered upon all, without respect of persons.

Luke ix. 55, 56.
Matt. vii. 12, 13, 29.
Tit. iii. 10.

THE QUESTION IS, Whether the civil magistrate hath power to force men in things religious to do contrary to their con-

Digitized by Google

science; and if they will not, to punish them in their goods, liberties, or lives? This we hold in the negative.

But as we would have the magistrate to avoid this extreme of encroaching upon men's consciences, so on the other hand we are far from joining with or strengthening such libertines as would stretch the liberty of their consciences to the prejudice of their neighbors, or to the ruin of human society. We understand therefore by matters of conscience such as immediately relate betwixt God and man, or men and men, that are under the same persuasion, as to meet together and worship God in that way which they judge is most acceptable unto him, and not to encroach upon, or seek to force their neighbors, otherwise than by reason, or such other means as Christ and his apostles used, viz.: Preaching and instructing such as will hear and receive it; but not at all for men, under the notion of conscience, to do anything contrary to the moral and perpetual statutes generally acknowledged by all Christians; in which case the magistrate may very lawfully use his authority. But the liberty we lay claim to is such as the primitive church justly sought under the heathen emperors, to wit, for men of sobriety, honesty, and a peaceable conversation, to enjoy the liberty and exercise of their conscience towards God and among themselves, and to admit among them such as by their persuasion and influence come to be convinced of the same truth with them, without being therefore molested by the civil magistrate. Though we would not have men hurt in their temporals, nor robbed of their privileges as men and members of the commonwealth, because of their

Digitized by Google

inward persuasion; yet we are far from judging that in the church of God there should not be censures exercised against such as fall into error, as well as such as commit open evils; and therefore we believe it may be very lawful for a Christian church, if she find any of her members fall into any error, after due admonitions and instructions according to gospel order, if she find them pertinacious, to cut them off from her fellowship by the sword of the Spirit, and deprive them of those privileges which they had as fellow-members; but not to cut them off from the world by the temporal sword, or rob them of their common privileges as men, seeing they enjoy not these as Christians, or under such a fellowship, but as men, and members of the creation.

THAT NO MAN, BY VIRTUE of any power or principality he hath in the government of this world, hath power over the consciences of men, is apparent, because the conscience of man is the seat and throne of God in him, of which God is the alone proper and infallible judge, who by his power and Spirit can alone rectify the mistakes of conscience, and therefore hath reserved to himself the power of punishing the errors thereof as he seeth meet.

This pretended power of the magistrate is inconsistent with the nature of the gospel. It was contrary to the nature of Christ's ministry to use any force or violence in the gathering of souls to him. This he abundantly expressed in his reproof to the two sons of Zebedee, who would have been calling for fire from heaven to burn those that refused to receive him: we see what Christ saith to

Digitized by Google

them, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of," Luke ix. 55, "For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Here Christ shows that such kind of zeal was no ways approved of by him; and such as think to make way for Christ or his gospel by this means, do not understand what spirit they are of. If it was not according to the wisdom of Christ, who was and is King of kings, by outward force to constrain others to believe him or receive him, do not they grossly offend him, who will needs be wiser than he, and think to force men against their persuasion to conform to their doctrine and worship?

THIS FORCING OF men's consciences is contrary to sound reason and the very law of nature. For man's understanding cannot be forced by all the bodily sufferings another man can inflict upon him, especially in matters spiritual and supernatural. It is argument, and evident demonstration of reason, together with the power of God reaching the heart, that can change a man's mind from one opinion to another, and not knocks and blows and such like things, which may well destroy the body, but never can inform the soul, which is a free agent, and must either accept or reject matters of opinion as they are borne in upon it by something proportioned to its own nature. To seek to force minds in any other manner, is to deal with men as if they were brutes, void of understanding. By that course indeed men may be made hypocrites, but can never be made Christians; and surely the products of such compulsion, even where the end is obtained, to wit, an outward assent or conformity, whether in doctrine or worship,

Digitized by Google

can be no ways acceptable to God, who desireth not any sacrifice, except that which cometh thoroughly from the heart, and will have no constrained ones: so that men, by constraining force, are so far from being members of the church, that they are made ten times more the servants of Satan than before; in that to their error is added hypocrisy, the worst of evils in matters of religion, and that which above all things the Lord's soul most abhors.

THE GROUND OF persecution is an unwillingness to suffer; for no man that will persecute another for his conscience, would suffer for his own if he could avoid it, seeing his principle obliges him, if he had power, by force to establish that which he judges is the truth, and so to force others to it.

The true, faithful, and Christian suffering is for men to profess what they are persuaded is right, and so practise and perform their worship towards God, as being their true right so to do; and neither to do more in that, because of outward encouragement from men; nor any whit less, because of the fear of their laws and acts against it. Thus for a Christian man to vindicate his just liberty with so much boldness, and yet innocency, will in due time, though through blood, purchase peace; as this age hath in some measure experienced, and many are witnesses of it; which yet shall be more apparent to the world, as truth takes place in the earth.

But of this excellent patience and sufferings, the witnesses of God, in scorn called Quakers, have given a manifest proof: for so soon as God revealed his truth among

Digitized by Google

them, without regard to any opposition whatsoever, or what they might meet with, they went up and down, as they were moved of the Lord, preaching and propagating the truth in market-places, highways, streets, and public temples, though daily beaten, whipped, bruised, haled, and imprisoned therefor. And when there was anywhere a church or assembly gathered, they taught them to keep their meetings openly, and not to shut the door, nor do it by stealth, that all might know it, and those who would might enter. And as hereby all just occasion of fear of plotting against the government was fully removed, so this their courage and faithfulness in not giving over their meeting together (but more especially the presence and glory of God manifested in the meeting being terrible to the consciences of the persecutors), did so weary out the malice of their adversaries, that oftentimes they were forced to leave their work undone. For when they came to break up a meeting, they were obliged to take every individual out by force, they not being free to give up their liberty by dissolving at their command: and when they were haled out, unless they were kept forth by violence, they presently returned peaceably to their place. Yea, when sometimes the magistrates have pulled down their meeting-houses, they have met the next day openly upon the rubbish, and so by innocency kept their possession and ground, being properly their own, and their right to meet and worship God being not forfeited to any. As this patient but yet courageous way of suffering made the persecutors' work very heavy and wearisome unto them, so the courage and

Digitized by Google

patience of the sufferers, using no resistance, nor bringing any weapons to defend themselves, nor seeking any ways revenge upon such occasions, did secretly smite the hearts of the persecutors, and made their chariot wheels go on heavily.

Glory to God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that now these twenty-five years, since we were known to be a distinct and separate people, hath given us faithfully to suffer for his name, without shrinking or fleeing the cross; and what liberty we now enjoy, it is by his mercy, and not by any outward working or procuring of our own, but it is He has wrought upon the hearts of our opposers.

Digitized by Google

PROPOSITION XV.

CONCERNING SALUTATIONS AND RECREATIONS, ETC.

SEEING the chief end of all religion is to redeem men from the spirit and vain conversation of this world, and to lead into inward communion with God, before whom if we fear always we are accounted happy; therefore all the vain customs and habits thereof, both in word and deed, are to be rejected and forsaken by those who come to this fear; such as taking off the hat to a man, the bowings and cringings of the body, and such other salutations of that kind, with all the foolish and superstitious formalities attending them; all which man hath invented in his degenerate state, to feed his pride in the vain pomp and glory of this world: as also the unprofitable plays, frivolous recreations, sportings, and gamings, which are invented to pass away the precious time, and divert the mind from the witness of God in the heart, and from the living sense of his fear, and from that evangelical spirit wherewith Christians ought to be leavened and which leads into sobriety, gravity, and godly fear; in which as we abide, the blessing of the Lord is felt to attend us in those actions in which we are necessarily engaged, in order to the taking care for the sustenance of the outward man.

Ephes. v. 11. 1 Pet. i. 14. John v. 44. Jer. x. 3. Acts x. 26. Matt. xv. 13. Col. ii. 8.

Digitized by Google

HAVING HITHERTO treated of the principles of religion, both relating to doctrine and worship, I am now to speak of some practices which have been the product of this principle, in those witnesses whom God hath raised up in this day to testify for his truth.

There are some things, which most plead for the lawfulness of and allow themselves in, as no ways inconsistent with the Christian religion, which we have found to be no ways lawful unto us, and have been commanded of the Lord to lay them aside; though the doing thereof hath occasioned no small sufferings and buffetings, and hath procured us much hatred and malice from the world.

I. That it is not lawful to give to men such flattering titles, as Your Holiness, Your Majesty, Your Eminency, Your Excellency, Your Grace, Your Lordship, Your Honor, etc., nor use those flattering words, commonly called COMPLIMENTS.

II. That it is not lawful for Christians to kneel, or prostrate themselves to any man, or to bow the body, or to uncover the head to them.

III. That it is not lawful for a Christian to use superfluities in apparel, as are of no use save for ornament and vanity.

IV. That it is not lawful to use games, sports, plays, nor among other things comedies among Christians, under the notion of recreations, which do not agree with Christian silence, gravity, and sobriety; for laughing, sporting, gaming, mocking, jesting, vain talking, etc., is not Christian liberty, nor harmless mirth.

Digitized by Google

V. That it is not lawful for Christians to swear at all under the gospel; not only not vainly, and in their common discourse, but even not in judgment before the magistrate.

VI. That it is not lawful for Christians to resist evil, or to war or fight in any case.

I WOULD NOT HAVE any judge, that hereby we intend to destroy the mutual relation that either is betwixt prince and people, master and servants, parents and children; nay, not at all: we shall evidence that our principle in these things hath no such tendency, and that these natural relations are rather better established, than any ways hurt by it. Next, Let not any judge, that from our opinion in these things, any necessity of levelling will follow, or that all men must have things in common. Our principle leaves every man to enjoy that peaceably, which either his own industry, or his parents, have purchased to him; only he is thereby instructed to use it aright, both for his own good and that of his brethren; and all to the glory of God: in which also his acts are to be voluntary, and no ways constrained. And further, we say not hereby, that no man may use the creation more or less than another: for we know, that as it hath pleased God to dispense it diversely, giving to some more, and some less, so they may use it accordingly. The several conditions, under which men are diversely stated, together with their educations answering thereunto, do sufficiently show this: the servant is not the same way educated as the master; nor the tenant as the landlord; nor the rich as the poor; nor the prince as the peasant. Now, though it be not lawful for any, however

Digitized by Google

great abundance they may have, or whatever their education may be, to use that which is merely superfluous; yet seeing their education has accustomed them thereunto, and their capacity enables them so to do without being profuse or extravagant, they may use things better in their kind than such whose education hath neither accustomed them to such things, nor their capacity will reach to compass them. For it is beyond question, that whatever thing the creation affords is for the use of man, and the moderate use of them is lawful; yet they may be unlawful to some and not to others. The safe place is, for such as have fulness, to watch over themselves, that they use it moderately, and rescind all superfluities; being willing, as far as they can, to help the need of those to whom Providence hath allotted a smaller allowance. Let the brother of high degree rejoice, in that he is abased; and such as God calls in a low degree, be content with their condition, not envying those brethren who have greater abundance; knowing they have received abundance, as to the inward man, which is chiefly to be regarded; and that as to the inward and spiritual fellowship of the saints, they become the brethren and companions of the greatest and richest: and in this respect, Let him of low degree rejoice that he is exalted.

THESE THINGS PREMISED, I would ask all such as choose to be Christians indeed, whether it would not greatly contribute to the commendation of Christianity, and to the increase of the life and virtue of Christ, if all superfluous titles of honor, profuseness, and prodigality in meat and apparel, gaming, sporting, and playing, were laid aside and

Digitized by Google

forborne? And whether such as lay them aside, in so doing, walk not more like the disciples of Christ and his apostles, than such as use them? Whether the laying them aside would hinder any from being good Christians? Or if Christians might not be better without them than with them? God hath made it manifest in this age, that by discovering the evil of such things, and leading his witnesses out of them and to testify against them, he hath produced effectually in many that mortification and abstraction from the love and cares of this world, who daily are conversing in the world, but inwardly redeemed out of it, which was judged could only be obtained by such as were shut up in cloisters and monasteries. Thus much in general.

As to the first we affirm positively, That it is not lawful for Christians either to give or receive these titles of honor, as, Your Holiness, Your Majesty, Your Excellency, Your Eminency, etc. These titles are no part of that obedience which is due to magistrates or superiors. We find not that in the scripture any such titles are used, either under the law or the gospel. Their use lays a necessity upon Christians frequently to lie; because the persons obtaining these titles, either by election or hereditarily, may frequently be found to have nothing really in them deserving them. It is apparent, and cannot be denied by any, but that those virtues are not in many of the persons expressed by the titles they bear. Such as are truly virtuous, must not be styled by their virtues, because not privileged by the princes of this world; and such as have

Digitized by Google

them not, must be so called, because they have obtained a patent so to be: and all this is done by those who profess to be his followers, that commanded his disciples, Not to be called of men, Master; and told them, such could not believe as received honor one from another, and sought not the honor which cometh from God only.

The Christians speak to the apostles without any such denomination as, If it please Your Grace, Your Holiness, Your Lordship, nor Your Worship; they are neither called, My Lord Peter, nor My Lord Paul; nor yet Master Peter, nor Master Paul; nor Doctor Peter, nor Doctor Paul; but singly Peter and Paul; and that not only in the scripture, but for some hundreds of years after: so that this appears to be a manifest fruit of the apostasy. For if these titles arise either from the office or worth of the persons, it will not be denied, but the apostles deserved them better than any now that call for them. But the case is plain; the apostles had the holiness, the excellency, the grace; and because they were holy, excellent, and gracious, they neither used, nor admitted of such titles. As to that title of Majesty, usually ascribed to princes, we do not find it given to any such in the holy scripture; but that it is specially and peculiarly ascribed unto God.

ALL THESE TITLES and styles of honor are to be rejected by Christians, because they are to seek the honor that comes from above, and not the honor that is from below: but these honors are not that honor that comes from above, but are from below. For judge, Is it the meek and innocent Spirit of Christ that covets that honor? Is it that Spirit that

Digitized by Google

must be of no reputation in this world, that has its conversation in heaven, that comes to have fellowship with the sons of God? Is it that Spirit, I say, that loves Phil. ii. 20. that honor, that seeks after that honor, that pleads for the upholding of that honor, that frets, and rages, and fumes, when it is denied that honor? If we look either to the nature of this honor, the cause of it, the ways it is conveyed, the terms in which it is delivered, it cannot be used by such as desire to be Christians in good earnest.

Now besides these general titles of honor, what gross abuses are crept in among such as are called Christians in the use of compliments, wherein not servants to masters, or others, with respect to any such kind of relations, but others who have no such relation, do say and write to one another, at every turn, Your humble servant, Your most obedient servant, etc. Such wicked customs have, to the great prejudice of souls, accustomed Christians to lie; and to use lying is now come to be accounted civility. It is strange, that such as pretend to scripture as their rule should not be ashamed to use such things; since Elihu, who had not the scriptures, could say, Job xxxii. 21, 22: "Let me not accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my Maker would soon take me away."

It will not be unfit in this place to say something concerning the using of the singular number to one person; concerning which James Howel, in his epistle to the nobility of England, before the French and English Dictionary, takes notice, "That both in France, and in other nations, the

Digitized by Google

word *thou* was used in speaking to one; but by succession of time, when the Roman commonwealth grew into an empire, the courtiers began to magnify the emperor (as being furnished with power to confer dignities and offices), using the word *you;* yea, and deifying him with more remarkable titles. So that the word *you* in the plural number, together with the other titles and compellations of honor, seem to have taken their rise from monarchical government; which afterwards, by degrees, came to be derived to private persons." The same is witnessed by John Maresius, of the French academy, in the preface of his Clovis. "The use of the word *you*, when one person is spoken to, was only introduced by these base flatterers of men of latter ages, to whom it seemed good to use the plural number to one person, that he may imagine himself alone to be equal to many others in dignity and worth; from whence at last it came to persons of lower quality."

Seeing it is manifest to us that this form of speaking to men in the plural number doth proceed from pride, as well as that it is in itself a lie, we found a necessity upon us to testify against this corruption, by using the singular equally unto all. And although no reason can be given why we should be persecuted upon this account, especially by Christians, who profess to follow the rule of scripture, whose dialect this is; yet it would perhaps seem incredible if I should relate how much we have suffered for this thing.

SECONDLY, NEXT UNTO this of titles, the other part of honor used among Christians is the kneeling, bowing, and uncovering of the head to one another.

Digitized by Google

God, who is the creator of man, and he to whom he oweth the dedication both of soul and body, is over all to be worshipped and adored, and that not only by the spirit, but also with the prostration of body. Now kneeling, bowing, and uncovering of the head, is the alone outward signification of our adoration towards God, and therefore it is not lawful to give it unto man. He that kneeleth, or prostrates himself to man, what doth he more to God? He that boweth, and uncovereth his head to the creature, what hath he reserved to the Creator? Men being alike by creation, though their several relations require from them mutual services according to those respective relations, owe not worship one to another, but all equally are to return it to God: because it is to him, and his name alone, that every knee must bow, and before whose throne the four and twenty elders prostrate themselves. Therefore for men to take this one from another, is to rob God of his glory: since all the duties of relations may be performed one to another without these kind of bowings, which therefore are no essential part of our duty to man, but to God. We see that Peter refused it from Cornelius, saying, He was a man. Yea, we see, that the angel twice refused this kind of bowing from John, Rev. xix. 10, and xxii. 9, for this reason, "Because I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren;" abundantly intimating that it is not lawful for fellow-servants thus to prostrate themselves one to another: and in this respect all men are fellow-servants.

These things being thus considered, it is remitted to the judgment of such as are desirous to be found Christians

Digitized by Google

indeed, whether we are worthy of blame for waiving it to men. Let those then that will blame us consider whether they might not as well accuse Mordecai of incivility, who was no less singular than we in this matter. And forasmuch as they accuse us herein of rudeness and pride, though the testimony of our consciences in the sight of God be a sufficient guard against such calumnies, yet there are of us known to be men of such education, as forbear not these things for want of that they call good breeding; and we should be very void of reason to purchase that pride at so dear a rate, as many have done the exercise of their conscience in this matter; many of us having been sorely beaten and buffeted, yea, and several months imprisoned, for no other reason but because we could not so satisfy the proud unreasonable humors of proud men as to uncover our heads and bow our bodies. And this I can say boldly, in the sight of God, from my own experience, and that of many thousands more, that however small or foolish this may seem, yet we behoved to choose death rather than do it, and that for conscience' sake: and that in its being so contrary to our natural spirits, there are many of us, to whom the forsaking of these bowings and ceremonies was as death itself; which we could never have left, if we could have enjoyed our peace with God in the use of them. Though it be far from us to judge all those to whom God hath not shown the evil of them under the like hazard; yet nevertheless we doubt not but to such as would prove faithful witnesses to Christ's divine light in their consciences, God will also show the evil of these things.

Digitized by Google

THE THIRD THING to be treated of, is the vanity and superfluity of apparel. We shall not say that all persons are to be clothed alike, because it will perhaps neither suit their bodies nor their estates. And if a man be clothed soberly, and without superfluity, though they may be finer than that which his servant is clothed with, we shall not blame him for it: the abstaining from superfluities which his condition and education have accustomed him to, may be in him a greater act of mortification than the abstaining from finer clothes in the servant, who never was accustomed to them. The iniquity lies then here, First, When from a lust of vanity, and a desire to adorn themselves, men and women, not content with what their condition can bear, or their country easily affords, do stretch to have things, that from their rarity, and the price that is put upon them, seem to be precious, and so feed their lust the more; and this all sober men of all sorts will readily grant to be evil. Secondly, When men are not content to make a true use of the creation, whether the things be fine or coarse, and do not satisfy themselves with what need and conveniency call for, but add thereunto things merely superfluous.

Those that will needs so adorn themselves in the use of their clothes, as to beset them with things having no real use or necessity, but merely for ornament sake, do openly declare that the end of it is either to please their lust, for which end these things are chiefly invented and contrived, or otherwise to gratify a vain and ostentatious mind; and it is obvious these are their general ends in so doing. Yea, we see how easily men are puffed up with their garments,

Digitized by Google

and how proud and vain they are, when adorned to their mind. Now how far these things are below a true Christian, and how unsuitable, needs very little proof. Hereby those who love to be gaudy and superfluous in their clothes, show they concern themselves little with mortification and self-denial, and that they study to beautify their bodies more than their souls; which prove they think little upon mortality, and so certainly are more nominal than real Christians.

The scripture severely reproves such practices, both commending and commanding the contrary; as Isa. iii., how severely doth the prophet reprove the daughters of Israel for their tinkling ornaments, their cauls, and their round tires, their chains and bracelets, etc., and yet is it not strange to see Christians allow themselves in these things, from whom a more strict and exemplary conversation is required? Christ desires us not to be anxious about our clothing, Matt. vi. 25, and to show the vanity of such as glory in the splendor of their clothing, tells them, That even Solomon, in all his glory, was not to be compared to the lily of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. But surely they make small reckoning of Christ's words and doctrine that are so curious in their clothing, and so industrious to deck themselves, and so earnest to justify it, and so enraged when they are reproved for it.

The apostle Paul is very positive in this respect, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, "I will therefore in like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, and not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls

Digitized by Google

or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." To the same purpose saith Peter, 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," etc. Here both the apostles do very positively and expressly assert that the adorning of Christian women ought not to be outward, nor consist in the apparel: and that they ought not to use the plaiting of the hair, or ornaments, etc., which was at that time the custom of the nations. But is it not strange, that such as make the scripture their rule, and pretend they are guided by it, should not only be so generally in the use of these things, which the scripture so plainly condemns, but also should attempt to justify themselves in so doing? For the apostles not only commend the forbearance of these things, as an attainment commendable in Christians, but condemn the use of them as unlawful; and yet may it not seem more strange, that in contradiction to the apostles' doctrine, as if they had resolved to slight their testimony, they should condemn those that out of conscience apply themselves seriously to follow it, as if in so doing they were singular, proud, or superstitious?

FOURTHLY, LET US consider the use of games, sports, comedies, and other such things, commonly used by all the several sorts of Christians, under the notion of divertisement and recreation, and see whether these things can consist with the seriousness, gravity, and Godly fear, which

Digitized by Google

the gospel calls for. The apostle commands us, That "whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do it all to the glory of God." But I judge none will affirm, That in the use of these sports and games God is glorified: if any should so say, they would declare they neither knew God nor his glory. And experience abundantly proves, that in the practice of these things men mind nothing less than the glory of God, and nothing more than the satisfaction of their own carnal lusts, wills, and appetites. The apostle desires us, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 31: Because the time is short, that they that buy should be as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it, etc. But how can they be found in the obedience of this precept that plead for the use of these games and sports, who, it seems, think the time so long, that they cannot find occasion enough to employ it, neither in taking care for their souls, nor yet in the necessary care for their bodies; but invent these games and sports to pass it away.

The apostle Peter desires us, "To pass the time of our sojourning here in fear," 1 Pet. i. 17. But will any say, That such as use dancing and comedies, carding and dicing, do so much as mind this precept in the use of these things? There is no duty more frequently commanded, nor more incumbent upon Christians, than the fear of the Lord, to stand in awe before him, to walk as in his presence; but if such as use these games and sports will speak from their consciences, they can, I doubt not, experimentally declare, that this fear is forgotten in their gaming; and if God by his light secretly touch them, or mind them of the vanity

Digitized by Google

of their way, they strive to shut it out, and use their gaming as an engine to put away from them that troublesome guest, and thus make merry over the Just One, whom they have slain and crucified in themselves.

But further, if Christ's reasoning be to be heeded, who saith, Matt. xii. 35, 36: That "the good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things," and that "of every idle word we shall give an account in the day of judgment," it may be easily gathered from what treasure these inventions come; and it may be easily proved, that it is from the evil, and not the good. Let men that believe their souls are immortal, and that there will be a day of judgment in which these words of Christ will be accomplished, answer me, how all these will make account in that great and terrible day, of all these idle words that are necessarily made use of about dancing, gaming, carding, and comedies acting? And yet how is it that by Christians not condemning these things, but allowing of them, many that are accounted Christians take up their whole time in them, yea, make it their trade and employment? And it cannot be denied, as being obviously manifest by experience, that such as are masters of these occupations, and are most delighted in them, if they be not open Atheists and profligates, are such at best as make religion or the care of their souls their least business. Now if these things were discountenanced by Christians, as inconsistent with their profession, it would remove these things: for these wretches would be necessitated then to

Digitized by Google

betake themselves to some honest livelihood, if they were not fed and upholden by these. And as hereby a great scandal and stumbling-block would be removed from off the Christian name, so also would that in part be taken out of the way which provokes the Lord to withhold his blessing, and by occasion of which things the minds of many remain chained in darkness, and drowned in lust, sensuality, and worldly pleasures, without any sense of God's fear, or their own souls' salvation.

But they object, That men's spirits could not subsist if they were always intent upon serious and spiritual matters, and that therefore there is need of some divertisement to recreate the mind a little, whereby it, being refreshed, is able with greater vigor to apply itself to these things.

We do not plead that men should be always in the same intentiveness of mind, knowing how impossible it is, so long as we are clothed with this tabernacle of clay. But this will not allow us at any time so to recede from the remembrance of God, and of our souls' chief concern, as not still to retain a certain sense of his fear; which cannot be so much as rationally supposed to be in the use of these things which we condemn. Now the necessary occasions in which all are involved, in order to the care of the outward man, are a relaxation of the mind from the more serious duties; and those are performed in the blessing, as the mind is so leavened with the love of God, and the sense of his presence, that even in doing these things the soul carrieth with it that divine influence and spiritual habit. Now if any will plead, that for relaxation of mind, there may be

Digitized by Google

a liberty allowed beyond these things which are of absolute need to the sustenance of the outward man, I shall not much contend against it; provided these things be not such as are wholly superfluous, or in their proper nature and tendency lead the mind into lust, vanity, and wantonness, as being chiefly contrived and framed for that end, or generally experienced to produce these effects. In all which things we are not so to forget God, in whom we both live and are moved, Acts xvii. 28, as not to have always some secret reserve to him, and sense of his fear and presence; which also frequently exerts itself in the midst of these things by some short aspiration and breathings.

FIFTHLY, THE USE of swearing is to be considered, which is so frequently practised almost among all Christians; not only profane oaths among the profane, in their common discourses, whereby the most HOLY NAME of GOD is in a horrible manner daily blasphemed; but also solemn oaths, with those that have some show of piety; whereof the most part do defend swearing before the magistrate with so great zeal, that not only they are ready themselves to do it upon every occasion, but also have stirred up the magistrates to persecute those who, out of obedience to Christ, their Lord and master, judge it unlawful to swear; upon which account not a few have suffered imprisonment and the spoiling of their goods.

But considering these clear words of our Saviour, Matt. v. 33, 34, "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto

Digitized by Google

you, SWEAR NOT AT ALL, neither by heaven," etc. "But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil:" as also the words of the apostle James, v. 12, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation:" I say, considering these clear words, it is surprising how any one that professeth the name of Christ can pronounce any oath with a quiet conscience, far less to persecute other Christians that dare not swear, because of their master Christ's authority. For Christ, First, proposeth it to us negatively, Swear not at all, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by thy head, etc. And again, "Swear not by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath." Secondly, he presseth it affirmatively, "But let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil." And saith James, "Lest ye fall into condemnation."

Which words both all and every one of them do make such a full prohibition, and so free of all exception, that it is strange how men that boast the scripture is the rule of their faith and life, can counterfeit any exception! Certainly reason ought to teach every one, that it is not lawful to make void a general prohibition coming from God by such opposition, unless the exception be as clearly and evidently expressed as the prohibition. Neither is it to be omitted that, without doubt, the most learned doctors of each sect know that these fore-mentioned words were

Digitized by Google

understood by the ancient fathers of the first three hundred years after Christ to be a prohibition of all sorts of oaths.

IT IS EVIDENT that Christ forbids somewhat that was permitted under the law, to wit, to swear by the name of God, because it was not lawful for any man to swear but by God himself. And because he saith, "Neither by heaven, because it is the throne of God;" therefore he excludes all other oaths, even those which are made by God; for he saith, chap. xxiii. 22. "He that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon:" which is also to be understood of the rest. And that he might put the matter beyond all controversy, he adds, "Neither by any other oath:" therefore seeing to swear before the magistrate by God is an oath, it is here without doubt forbidden.

IT IS OBJECTED, That by these words oaths by God's name cannot be forbidden, because the Heavenly Father hath commanded them; for the Father and the Son are one, which could not be, if the Son had forbid that which the Father commanded.

I answer, They are indeed one, and cannot contradict one another: nevertheless the Father gave many things to the Jews for a time, because of their infirmity under the old covenant, which had only a shadow of good things to come, not the very substance of things, until Christ should come, who was the substance, and by whose coming all these things vanished, to wit, sabbaths, circumcision, the paschal lamb: men used then sacrifices, who lived in controversies with God, and one with another, which all are

Digitized by Google

abrogated in the coming of the Son, who is the Substance, Eternal Word, and Essential Oath and Amen, in whom the promises of God are Yea and Amen: who came that men might be redeemed out of strife, and might make an end of controversy.

IT IS OBJECTED, That solemn oaths which God commanded, cannot be here forbidden by Christ; for he saith, that they come from evil: but these did not come from evil; for God never commanded anything that was evil, or came from evil.

I answer, There are things which are good because commanded, and evil because forbidden; other things are commanded because good, and forbidden because evil. As circumcision and oaths, which were good when and because they were commanded, and in no other respect; and again, when and because prohibited under the gospel, they are evil.

And in all these Jewish constitutions, however ceremonial, there was something of good, to wit, in their season, as prefiguring some good: as by circumcision, the purifications, and other things, the holiness of God was typified, and that the Israelites ought to be holy, as their God was holy. In the like manner oaths, under the shadows and ceremonies, signified the verity of God, his faithfulness and certainty; and therefore that we ought in all things to speak and witness the truth. But the witness of truth was before all oaths, and remains when all oaths are abolished; and this is the morality of all oaths; and so long as men abide therein, there is no necessity or place for oaths.

Digitized by Google

IT IS OBJECTED that the apostle Paul approves oaths used among men, when he writes, Heb. vi. 16: "For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife."

I answer; The apostle tells indeed in this place what men at that time did, who lived in controversies and incredulity; not what they ought to have done, nor what the saints did, who were redeemed from strife and incredulity, and had come to Christ, the Truth and Amen of God. Moreover, he only alludes to a certain custom usual among men, that he might express the firmness of the divine promise, in order to excite in the saints so much the more confidence in God promising to them; not that he might instigate them to swear against the law of God, or confirm them in that; no, not at all: for neither doth 1 Cor. ix. 24 teach Christians the vain races, whereby men oftentimes, even to the destruction of their bodies, are wearied to obtain a corruptible prize; so neither doth Christ, who is the Prince of Peace, teach his disciples to fight, albeit he takes notice, Luke xiv. 31, what it behoveth such kings to do who are accustomed to fight, as prudent warriors therein.

IT IS NO WAYS LAWFUL for a Christian to swear, whom Christ has called to his essential truth, which was before all oaths, forbidding him to swear; and on the contrary, commanding him to speak the truth in all things, to the honor of Christ who called him; that it may appear that the words of his disciples may be as truly believed as the oaths of all the worldly men. Neither is it lawful for them to be unfaithful in this, that they may please others, or that

Digitized by Google

they may avoid their hurt: for thus the primitive Christians for some ages remained faithful, who being required to swear, did unanimously answer, I am a Christian, I do not swear. Who needs to doubt, but that since Christ would have his disciples attain the highest pitch of perfection, he abrogated oaths, as a rudiment of infirmity, and in place thereof established the use of truth? Who can now think that the holy martyrs and ancient fathers of the first three hundred years so opposed themselves to oaths only that they might rebuke vain and rash oaths, which were also prohibited under the mosaical law; and not also swearing by the true God in truth and righteousness, which was there commanded?

SIXTHLY, THE LAST thing to be considered is revenge and war, an evil as opposite and contrary to the Spirit and doctrine of Christ as light to darkness. Through contempt of Christ's law the whole world is filled with violence, oppression, murders, spoilings, burnings, devastations, and all manner of lasciviousness and cruelty. And this finds place, and is fomented, among those men that profess themselves disciples of our peaceable Lord and master Jesus Christ, who by excellency is called the Prince of Peace, and hath expressly prohibited his children all violence; and on the contrary, commanded them, that, according to his example, they should follow patience, charity, forbearance, and other virtues worthy of a Christian?

Hear then what this great prophet saith, whom every soul is commanded to hear, under the pain of being cut off, Matt. v., from verse 38 to the end of the chapter. For

Digitized by Google

thus he saith: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

James testifies, That wars and strifes come from the lusts, which war in the members of carnal men; but Christians, that is, those that are truly saints, "have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts;" therefore they cannot indulge them by waging war. The prophets Isaiah and Micah have expressly prophesied, That in the mountain of the house of the Lord, Christ shall judge the nations, and then "they shall

James iv. 1. Gal. v. 24.

Isa. ii. 4. Mic. iv. 3.

Digitized by Google

beat their swords into ploughshares," etc. And the ancient fathers of the first three hundred years after Christ did affirm these prophecies to be fulfilled in the Christians of their times.

Christ said, That "his kingdom is not of this world," and therefore that his servants shall not fight; therefore those that fight are not his disciples nor servants. He reproved Peter for the use of the sword, saying, "Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

John xviii. 36. Matt. xxvi. 12.

The apostle admonisheth Christians, That they defend not themselves, neither revenge by rendering evil for evil; but give place unto wrath, because vengeance is the Lord's. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Christ calls his children to bear his cross, not to crucify or kill others; to patience, not to revenge; to truth and simplicity, not to fraudulent stratagems of war; to flee the glory of this world, not to acquire it by warlike endeavors; therefore war is altogether contrary unto the law and Spirit of Christ.

Rom. xii. 17 to 21. Mark viii. 34.

Something is expressly forbidden by Christ, Matt. v. 38, etc., which was granted to the Jews in their time, because of their hardness; and, on the contrary, we are commanded that singular patience and exercise of love which Moses commanded not to his disciples. From whence Tertullian saith well against Marc., "Christ truly teacheth a new

Digitized by Google

patience, even forbidding the revenge of an injury; which was permitted by the Creator."

IF IT IS OBJECTED, That defence is of natural right, and that religion destroys not nature, I answer, Be it so; but to obey God, and commend ourselves to him in faith and patience, is not to destroy nature, but to exalt and perfect it; to wit, to elevate it from the natural to the supernatural life, by Christ living therein, and comforting it, that it may do all things, and be rendered more than conqueror.

IT IS AS EASY TO obscure the sun at midday, as to deny that the primitive Christians renounced all revenge and war. And although this thing be so much known, yet it is as well known that almost all the modern sects live in the neglect and contempt of this law of Christ, and likewise oppress others who in this agree not with them for conscience' sake towards God: even as we have suffered much in our country, because we neither could ourselves bear arms, nor send others in our place, nor give our money for the buying of drums, standards, and other military attire; and lastly, because we could not hold our doors, windows, and shops close, for conscience' sake, upon such days as fasts and prayers were appointed to desire a blessing upon, and success for, the arms of the kingdom or commonwealth under which we live; neither give thanks for the victories acquired by the effusion of much blood. By which forcing of the conscience, they would have constrained our brethren, living in divers kingdoms at war together, to have implored our God for contrary and contradictory things, and consequently impossible: for it is impossible that two parties fighting together should both obtain the victory. And

Digitized by Google

because we cannot concur with them in this confusion, therefore we are subject to persecution.

IF IT BE OBJECTED, That the scriptures and old fathers, so called, did only prohibit private revenge, not the use of arms for the defence of our country, body, wives, children, and goods when the magistrate commands it, seeing the magistrate ought to be obeyed; therefore although it be not lawful for private men to do it of themselves, nevertheless they are bound to do it by the command of the magistrate; I answer, If the magistrate be truly a Christian, or desires to be so, he ought himself, in the first place, to obey the command of his master, saying, "Love your enemies," etc., and then he could not command us to kill them: but if he be not a true Christian, then ought we to obey our Lord and King, Jesus Christ, whom he ought also to obey: for in the kingdom of Christ all ought to submit to his laws, from the highest to the lowest.

BUT LASTLY, SINCE nothing seems more contrary to man's nature, (seeing of all things the defence of one's self seems most tolerable;) and as it is most hard to men, so it is the most perfect part of the Christian religion, as that wherein the denial of self and entire confidence in God doth most appear; and therefore Christ and his apostles left us hereof a most perfect example. The present confessors of the Christian name, who are not yet in the patient suffering spirit, are not yet fitted for this form of Christianity, and therefore cannot be undefending themselves until they attain that perfection. But for such whom Christ has brought hither, it is not lawful to defend themselves by arms, but they ought over all to trust to the Lord.

Digitized by Google

THE CONCLUSION.

IF in God's fear, candid reader, thou appliest thyself to consider this system of religion here delivered, with its consistency and harmony, as well in itself as with the scriptures of truth, I doubt not but thou wilt say with me and many more, that this is the spiritual day of Christ's appearance, wherein he is again revealing the ancient paths of truth and righteousness. For thou mayest observe here the Christian religion in all its parts truly established and vindicated, as it is a living, inward, spiritual, pure, and substantial thing, and not a mere form, show, shadow, notion, and opinion, as too many have hitherto held it. God hath raised for this end, and gathered us, that by us he might confound the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nought the understanding of the prudent; and might, in and by his own Spirit and power in a despised people (that no flesh might glory in his presence), pull down that dead, dark, corrupt image, and mere shadow and shell of Christianity wherewith Antichrist hath deceived the nations: for which end he hath called us to be a first-fruits of those that serve him, and worship him no more in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it! yea, he that hath arisen in a small remnant shall arise and go on by the same arm of

Digitized by Google

power in his spiritual manifestation, until he hath conquered all his enemies, until all the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdom of Christ Jesus.

UNTO HIM THAT HATH begun this work, not among the rich or great ones, but among the poor and small, and hath revealed it not to the wise and learned, but unto the poor, unto babes and sucklings; even to him, the Only-wise and Omnipotent GOD, be honor, glory, thanksgiving, and renown, from henceforth and for ever. Amen. Halle-lu-JAH.

THE END.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google